

PETER SCHLEMIHL
OR THE *SHADOWLESS* MAN



· CHAMISSO ·



ILLUSTRATED
BY
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UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA
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PETER SCHLEMIHL

THE SHADOWLESS MAN





Let us see what we can do for my child's poor mother

Peter Schlemihl, the
Shadowless Man
By Adelbert Chamisso

With Illustrations by Sir
PHILIP BURNE-JONES
and an Introduction by
JOSEPH JACOBS

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Ja, der hohe Delphier ist
Ein Schlemihl und gar der Lorber
Der so stolz die Stirne krönet
Ist ein Zeichen des Schlemihlthums.

Was das Wort Schlemihl bedeutet
Wissen wir. Hat doch Chamisso
Ihm das Bürgerrecht in Deutschland
Längst verschafft.

HEINE, *Romanzero.*

INTRODUCTION

HOW rare is it that any entirely novel form of plot is hit upon in European literature! One after another, authors make modifications in the stereotyped actions they have inherited from their predecessors; they steep them with their own temperament, and so give them artistic differentiation; but the plot of *Monte Cristo* remains the plot of *The Tempest*, with only the modifications due to change of venue, and needed to give artistic individuality.

Rare as is the invention of plot, invention of really effective and imaginative incident is perhaps even rarer. Robinson Crusoe gazing at a solitary footstep, Colonel Crawley tearing his wife's jewels

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from her and casting them at the prostrate Marquis of Steyne, Monte Cristo being cast into the sea near the Château d'If—how rare is it in the whole realm of imaginative literature we come across incidents like these that immediately revive in the imagination when we think of the respective books in which they occur. It shows how rare they are when we reflect that it is just possible that Colonel Crawley's blow, which was given in 1848, was after all but an imitation of old Martin Chuzzlewit's similar treatment of Pecksniff in 1844.

Rarest of all is, perhaps, what may be termed "symbolic" incident, where something occurs in a book which strikes the imagination, and at the same time suggests some problem of life. It does not follow that the particular problem suggested should be at all definite. When we read the incidents to which I refer, we feel at

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once that more is meant than meets the ear. This is more striking in the case of pictorial incident, where the more patent the symbolism, the less effective the picture. The dim suggestion contained in the *Robinson Crusoe* incident is more effective by its very vagueness than the very obvious *doubles entendres* of the *Pilgrim's Progress*. Perhaps the most effective of such symbolic work in literary art in modern times is *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, yet it would be somewhat difficult to point out any incident in that striking production which stands out from the rest, and recurs to the imaginative memory whenever it is referred to. Yes, striking symbolic incident is the rarest of all in literary art!

It is the distinction of *Peter Schlemihl* to possess an entirely novel plot, and at least one striking, and at the same time symbolic, incident. It is true that in its

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later stages the plot wanders off into inanity—Chamisso had clearly more on his hands than he knew what to do with; but in the earlier stages he makes the most of the very novel situation he had hit upon, and none who has read the book will ever forget the shrinking of the old women and the little boys and the beloved from the man without a shadow. Again, the incident of rolling up Peter's shadow and packing it away invariably recurs to any one who has read the book, and at the same time conveys a sense that there is more in the action than a mere phantasy. What it all precisely means, whether with subtle animism the man is to be regarded as having sold his soul when he has sold his shadow, or whether, as some pundits interpret the incident, the absence of the shadow shows that the light of heaven no longer plays upon him, need not detain our exegetic ingenuity. It is

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sufficient for our purpose that it means something, even though we do not precisely know what it does mean. That is indeed the essence of great art, both that it should obviously mean something outside what is either said or pictured, while at the same time we cannot fully interpret the true meaning. If *Peter Schlemihl* had been carried out with as much effectiveness as it was begun, it would have been one of the most impressive works in all the range of European literature.

Both its weakness and its strength are to some extent explained by the considerations of the time when it was produced, and of the man who composed it. Louis Charles Adelaide de Chamisso de Boncourt played in some measure in Germany the part that Heine did later in Paris. Born 27th January 1781, of a noble family of Champagne, he was carried by his parents during the Emigration to

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Würzburg, and afterwards to Berlin, where he acted as page to Queen Louise. He fought for a time against his fatherland in the Napoleonic wars, but was captured, and had to give his parole not to bear arms against France, which he accordingly visited during the peaceful period between Jena and the retreat from Moscow, during which *Peter Schlemihl* was written.

Up to the time of the production of *Peter Schlemihl*, Chamisso had mainly shown literary tastes. He had edited with Varhagen von Ense the *Musenalmanach* for several years, and had been intimately connected with the circle of *literati* connected with the Schlegels, but he had been at the same time interested in various divisions of natural history, traces of which are shown in *Peter Schlemihl*. He had devoted particular attention to botanic studies, and in 1815 he received an

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invitation from the Russian Government to accompany an expedition in search of the North-West Passage as naturalist. He spent the three years from 1815 to 1818 on this voyage, and on his return received an appointment at the Botanical Gardens at Berlin. Though he did not altogether neglect the German muse, his productions were mainly botanical up to his death in 1839. His known life thus coincides almost exactly in point of time with the beginnings of the Romantic movement both in Germany and France.

Chamisso was thus in a remarkable measure at home in two literatures; he felt as a German, but wrote with something of French clearness. He was touched by the beginnings of the Romantic movement; there is something of Chateaubriand in *Peter Schlemihl*, both of the *Rénè* and of the *Itineraire* in the latter part of the book. The influence of the more

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prominent members of the German romantic school, and especially Fouqué and Tieck, is more marked in the tone than in any specific traits of the narrative. Indeed, in a measure, Chamisso may be regarded as their leader rather than as their pupil. Both are mentioned in the *Schlemihl*, the introductory epistle being addressed to Fouqué, while there is a reference in the latter part of the book to Tieck's interest in folk-tales, the *de rebus gestis Pollicilli* being nothing more than "The Adventures of Tom Thumb."

We can see the influence of the Romantic School both in the merits and in the failings of the book before us. That sentimentality which is the main flaw in eighteenth-century German literature, from which Goethe was not entirely free, and with which Schiller overflowed, is markedly in evidence in *Peter Schlemihl*. He gushes about Minna,

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he gushes even about Bendel, his more or less faithful servant. Much too of the flabbiness of the plot may be attributed to the influence of the Romantic School, with whom the plot was too generally a minor consideration.

But if *Peter Schlemihl* suffers somewhat from the prevailing sentiment of the school amidst which it arose, it gains still more by the freedom of imagination and a certain halo of individuality which it has in common with other products of the period. After all, at the moment when Napoleon was standing at bay at Leipzig there was nothing being produced in Europe having so intimately the vital quality of imagination as *Peter Schlemihl*. There is a touch of the *Arabian Nights* in the opening scene, and the Schlegels were at the time giving great attention to Oriental matters. So too the curious incidents towards the

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end of the book with the seven-leagued boots are probably derived from the new interest in folk-tales, which was shared by Tieck, and had been promoted by the first edition of their *Marchen* by the brothers Grimm in the year preceding *Peter Schlemihl*. The purse of Fortunatus comes, however, from another source, as we shall see. But between these two borrowed incidents the movement of the story moves on from one striking episode to another, all derived from the *idée mère* of the book, the man without a shadow.

This it is, of course, which gives it its unique place in German, one might almost say European, literature, and it is curious to trace the origin of the conception in Chamisso's mind. In after years he frankly explained how the idea came into his head in a letter to a Russian friend whom he had met on his

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scientific tour. After the typical manner of the pedant, he had, while on a walking tour, lost almost everything he had about him—his hat, his knapsack, his gloves, and pocket-handkerchief. When telling Fouqué of this adventure after his return, the Baron with a smile asked him, “Did you not also lose your shadow?” The idea pleased the fancy of the company, and they set to work to imagine the circumstances which would follow from such a loss. Here was the germ which afterwards developed into *Peter Schlemihl*; and it will be observed that the original idea came, not from Chamisso, but from Fouqué, whose *Undine* and *Sintram* show powers of imagination superior in intensity to anything indicated by Chamisso’s other work. One might even venture so far as to regret that the idea was not carried out by Fouqué rather than by Chamisso.

Even the notion of a man who could

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bring out from his pocket whatever was asked for was not original with Chamisso. He says himself that it was suggested to him by an episode in *La Fontaine*, where a man distinguished for his politeness brings out of his pocket whatever was wished for. But surely the expandible tent was a direct "crib" from the "Princess Paribanou" in the *Arabian Nights*, where the same incident occurs. It is so rare that we are able to stand at the cradle of an imaginative incident, that it is worth while recording the origins of the main ideas of Chamisso's book.

Even the mysterious name Schlemihl can be traced. The dedicatory epistle is addressed to Julius Edward Hitzig, a distinguished Jewish scholar of the period, who was one of the leading lights in the Mendelssohnian circle in intimate relation with the Schlegels. Schlemihl is even to the present day the general Jewish

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expression among the German Jews and those descended from them for a man pursued by misfortune, and there is a curious legend which attempts to explain the origin of the name.

Diligent readers of the Bible will remember the curious incident in the twenty-fifth chapter of Numbers, in which a plague came upon the Israelites for their too pressing attentions to the daughters of Moab. The plague was stayed by Phineas, the son of Eleazar, thrusting through in his wrath an Israelite and a Midianitish woman. According to the statement of the Bible, the name of the Israelite was Zimri, one of the princes of the tribe of Simeon, but Jewish tradition has reported that the real sufferer was one Shelumiel, the son of Zurishaddai, who was quite innocent of the crime attributed to him by the son of the High Priest. Hence the custom of calling a

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person who suffers innocently by the name of Schlemihl. Heine has told the story in some lines of his inimitable *Romancero*, addressed to the very Hitzig to whom *Peter Schlemihl* is dedicated. Heine himself was afterwards a member of the Schlegel circle at Berlin, and may possibly have heard the tradition of the way in which the name came to Chamisso from Hitzig.

We can thus trace the origin of the chief incidents, and even of the name of *Peter Schlemihl*; but this by no means lessens the admiration due to Chamisso for the manner in which he has given life to the ideas he borrowed from his friends. They were merely disconnected conceptions, which he brought together with considerable skill, and gave them the life of the imagination.

While in one way the effectiveness of the idea is strengthened by the short

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compass in which it is presented to the reader, from another point of view the shortness of the book militates against its complete success. The notion of a shadowless man ought naturally to be brought out in all its attendant gruesomeness by the effect of the absence of the shadow on persons coming into contact with Peter. But these persons are themselves so shadowless, that it is in vain that we attempt to get up the same amount of horror as these lay figures are supposed to display. There is no such individuality about Bendel or Rascal or Minna as one of the great literary artists would have conferred upon them. The book with which one naturally contrasts it in this regard in English is Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Yet there it is the old doctor, the friend of Jekyll, and his butler, who give expression to the natural sentiments of horror

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produced by the remarkable events which are supposed to occur. It was the butler's reference to the mysterious object within the cabinet as "It" which brought home to most of us the weird nature of the plot. There is nothing at all parallel in *Peter Schlemihl* to this effective touch. It is rather the treatment of Peter by the crowds of children or old women that brings home to our imagination the effect of shadowlessness.

Chamisso must have felt the want of impressiveness of his treatment of the subject by the attempt he makes to produce the required shudder by the deal with the devil. Goethe had made the *Faust* bargain a commonplace of German literature, and it was accordingly with the greatest facility that Chamisso could pile on this particular piece of agony in addition to the original source of distraction. It must, however, be owned

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that he introduces by this means one effective incident, which, if properly realised, would have raised the required tremor of the flesh. The production from his pocket by the mysterious stranger of the altered and pallid form of Mr. Jones by the hair of his head has every element of the gruesome. But it is so evidently done with the object of Mr. Pickwick's Fat Joseph, that it fails of its effect. At the same time, it must be allowed that the Fiend is managed with considerable art. The fact that no name is given to him is by itself a remarkable touch; Mr. Kipling has used the same device *aliud agens* in *The Light that Failed*, where one of the chief minor characters is never referred to otherwise than as "the red-haired girl." It has been said that one of the reasons why we cannot distinguish between one Chinaman and another is because we do not know

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their names. The moment that we give them a name, like Li Hung Chang, we can distinguish their features. In somewhat an opposite manner, by refusing to name an individual in a plot we give them something of the awesome and mysterious, and this principle has been utilised by Chamisso in his treatment of the Fiend.

It is natural that a striking book of this kind should have made an impression from the beginning. It has been translated into almost every European tongue, sometimes more than once. In England there exists no less than three versions, one by William Howitt, another by Sir John Bowring, and the third, which appeared in Burns's Novelist Series in 1844, has been adopted here with a few modifications. There can be no doubt that its popularity in England was vastly added to by the characteristic cuts with which George Cruikshank

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adorned Bowring's version. Mr. Ruskin has exhausted the gamut of praise for Cruikshank's illustrations to Grimm, but his treatment of the *Schlemihl* story was almost exactly on the same lines, and that is in one way the chief objection to it. He makes his men too much like gnomes or supernatural beings, so that the absence of a shadow seems in some way natural, and not calling for notice. Otherwise, apart from their small scale, Cruikshank's designs might well be regarded as the ideal illustrations for *Schlemihl*.

As an example of the popularity of the book throughout Europe, it may be noticed that it formed the basis for a caricature of the Duke of Cumberland at the coronation of William IV. He was not popular, but consoled himself with the remark that popularity is but a shadow, whereupon a caricature appeared, in which the burly form of William was shown casting a

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shadow, while the Duke of Cumberland was unfurnished with that necessary companion. The motto ran, "Granted that popularity is but a shadow, it is not pleasant to be without that shadow." This appeared before Cruikshank's drawings had made the idea pictorially familiar.

I have said above that the purse of Fortunatus and its use by Chamisso could be traced elsewhere. I was referring to a recent discovery made by a German *Gelehrter*, which throws a light upon the origin of *Peter Schlemihl* somewhat different from the story as told by Chamisso himself. Herr E. F. Kossmann has discovered, and published three years ago, in a series devoted to German literary masterpieces in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a fragmentary drama in verse, written by Chamisso in 1806, and entitled *Fortunati Glückseckel und Wünschhüttlein*. This is not a very

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favourable specimen of Chamisso's verse, being entirely tentative in form, and noteworthy mainly as a specimen of his attempt to introduce classical metre into German. But it has its interest for us, since it shows that seven years before *Peter Schlemihl* was written Chamisso's imagination had been taken with the conception of the purse and wishing-cap of Fortunatus.

This is one of the world ideas of the imagination. I suppose few persons have ever lived who at one time of their life have not indulged in the thought of what they would do if they could get anything they wanted by wishing for it. That forms the subject of the day-dreams of most of us. It is clear from Mr. Kossmann's discovery that Chamisso had been attracted by this *motif*, and that its introduction into *Peter Schlemihl* was not at all accidental, but rather one of the principal elements in the *olla podrida*

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which make up *Peter Schlemihl*. He cannot, however, be congratulated on the use made of it. Peter Schlemihl exchanges his shadow for the purse and invisible cap, but neither helps him much in the disastrous condition in which he finds himself, and he gets rid of the purse at least in a manner altogether against the laws of dealing with the devil. The fundamental principle which rules these is that the devil's gifts cannot be got rid of unless the foul fiend takes them back of his own accord, and on his own terms. You cannot break the devil's bargain as easily as Chamisso represents.

Instead of attempting to recount the final issue of the bargain with the Fiend, which seems required by all the canons of symbolic art, Chamisso finishes off his book with a somewhat childish application of the fairy-tale incident of the Seven-Leagued Boots. It must be granted that

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he began this episode well. Peter obtains the boots, and on using them for the first time walks unconsciously through Siberia into China. The utility of the boots is thus made manifest in a striking and dramatic way, but having obtained possession of them, the only use to which Peter can put them to is to wander about collecting specimens for his botanical researches. Here, as elsewhere, we find Chamisso beginning with excellent intentions, but not knowing how to carry them out into full effect.

That is indeed the general impression left upon us by the perusal of *Peter Schlemihl*. Rarely in the history of romantic literature have so many happy ideas been utilised by an author within the covers of one book, but still more rarely has so little use been made of such excellent materials. *Peter Schlemihl* might have been one of the most effective of

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European allegories, instead of which it wanders about from one idea to another without connecting them together into one organic conception.

Still, notwithstanding its ineffectiveness, *Peter Schlemihl* remains one of the big conceptions in the early romantic literature of the century. No one that has ever read it can forget the mysterious stranger rolling up Peter's shadow and putting it into his wallet. That incident remains as the typical episode of the book. As we have seen, such incidents, when they are really novel and striking, are one of the rarest products of literary art, and *Peter Schlemihl* will accordingly always live by virtue of his lost shadow.

JOSEPH JACOBS.

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INTRODUCTORY EPISTLE

FROM A. VON CHAMISSE TO JULIUS
EDWARD HITZIG

You, who forget nobody, must surely remember one Peter Schlemihl, whom you used to meet occasionally at my house—a long-legged youth, who was considered stupid and lazy, on account of his awkward and careless air. I was sincerely attached to him. You cannot have forgotten him, Edward. He was on one occasion the hero of our rhymes, in the heyday of our youthful spirits; and I recollect taking him one evening to a poetical tea-party, where he fell asleep while I was writing, without even waiting to hear my effusion: and this reminds me of a witticism of yours respecting him.

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You had already seen him, I know not where or when, in an old black frockcoat, which, indeed, he constantly wore; and you said, "He would be a lucky fellow if his soul were half as immortal as his coat," so little opinion had you of him. *I* love him, however; and to this very Schlemihl, of whom for many years I had wholly lost sight, I am indebted for the little volume which I communicate to you, Edward, my most intimate friend, my second self, from whom I have no secrets;—to you, and of course our Fouqué, I commit them, who, like you, is intimately entwined about my dearest affections,—to him I communicate them only as a friend, but not as a poet; for you can easily imagine how unpleasant it would be if a secret confided to me by an honest man, relying implicitly on my friendship and honour, were to be exposed to the public in a poem.

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One word more as to the manner in which I obtained these sheets. Yesterday morning, early, as soon as I was up, they were brought to me. An extraordinary-looking man, with a long grey beard, and wearing an old black frockcoat, with a botanical case hanging at his side, and slippers over his boots, in the damp, rainy weather, had just been inquiring for me, and left me these papers, saying he came from Berlin.

ADELBERT VON CHAMISSE.

FROM THE BARON DE LA MOTTE
FOUQUÉ TO JULIUS EDWARD
HITZIG

WE should take care, my dear Edward, not to expose the history of poor Schle-mihl to eyes unfit to look upon it. That would be a bad experiment. Of such eyes there are plenty; and who is able to

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predict what may befall a *manuscript*, which is almost more difficult to guard than spoken language? Like a person seized with vertigo, therefore, who, in the paroxysm of his feelings, leaps into the abyss, I commit the story to the press.

And yet there are better and more serious reasons for the step I have taken. If I am not wholly deceived, there are in our dear Germany many hearts both capable and worthy of comprehending poor Schlemihl, although a smile will arise on the countenance of many among our honest countrymen at the bitter sport which was death to him and to the innocent being whom he drew along with him. And you, Edward, when you have seen the estimable work, and reflected on the number of unknown and sympathising bosoms who, with ourselves, will learn to love it, —you will then, perhaps, feel that some drops of consolation have been instilled

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into those wounds inflicted on you, and on all who love you, by death.

To conclude : I have become convinced, by repeated experience, that a guardian angel watches over books, places them in proper hands, and if not always, yet often, prevents them from falling into improper ones. In any case, he exercises an invisible guardianship over every work of true genius and genuine feeling, and with unfailing tact and skill opens or shuts its pages as he sees fit.

To this guardian angel I commit our "Schlemihl." And so, adieu !

FOUQUÉ.

NEUNHAUSEN, *May* 1814.

PETER SCHLEMIHL,
THE SHADOWLESS MAN

CHAPTER I

AFTER a prosperous, but to me very wearisome, voyage, we came at last into port. Immediately on landing I got together my few effects ; and, squeezing myself through the crowd, went into the nearest and humblest inn which first met my gaze. On asking for a room the waiter looked at me from head to foot, and conducted me to one. I asked for some cold water, and for the correct address of Mr. Thomas Jones, which was described as being “by the north gate, the first country-house to the right, a large

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new house of red and white marble, with many pillars." This was enough. As the day was not yet far advanced, I untied my bundle, took out my newly-turned black coat, dressed myself in my best clothes, and, with my letter of recommendation, set out for the man who was to assist me in the attainment of my moderate wishes.

After proceeding up the north street, I reached the gate, and saw the marble columns glittering through the trees. Having wiped the dust from my shoes with my pocket-handkerchief, and re-adjusted my cravat, I rang the bell—offering up at the same time a silent prayer. The door flew open, and the porter sent in my name. I had soon the honour to be invited into the park, where Mr. Jones was walking with a few friends. I recognised him at once by his corpulency and self-complacent air. He

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received me very well—just as a rich man receives a poor devil ; and, turning to me, took my letter. “ Oh, from my brother ! it is a long time since I heard from him : is he well ?—Yonder,” he went on,—turning to the company, and pointing to a distant hill—“ yonder is the site of the new building.” He broke the seal without discontinuing the conversation, which turned upon riches. “ The man,” he said, “ who does not possess at least a million is a poor wretch.” “ Oh, how true !” I exclaimed, in the fulness of my heart. He seemed pleased at this, and replied with a smile, “ Stop here, my dear friend ; afterwards I shall, perhaps, have time to tell you what I think of this,” pointing to the letter, which he then put into his pocket, and turned round to the company, offering his arm to a young lady. His example was followed by the other gentlemen, each politely escorting a lady ; and

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the whole party proceeded towards a little hill thickly planted with blooming roses.

I followed without troubling any one, for none took the least further notice of me. The party was in high spirits—lounging about and jesting—speaking sometimes of trifling matters very seriously, and of serious matters as triflingly—and exercising their wit in particular to great advantage on their absent friends and their affairs. I was too ignorant of what they were talking about to understand much of it, and too anxious and absorbed in my own reflections to occupy myself with the solution of such enigmas as their conversation presented.

By this time we had reached the thicket of roses. The lovely Fanny, who seemed to be the queen of the day, was obstinately bent on plucking a rose-branch for herself, and in the attempt pricked her finger with a thorn. The crimson stream, as if

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flowing from the dark-tinted rose, tinged her fair hand with the purple current. This circumstance set the whole company in commotion; and court-plaster was called for. A quiet, elderly man, tall, and meagre-looking, who was one of the company, but whom I had not before observed, immediately put his hand into the tight breast-pocket of his old-fashioned coat of grey sarsnet, pulled out a small letter-case, opened it, and, with a most respectful bow, presented the lady with the wished-for article. She received it without noticing the giver, or thanking him. The wound was bound up, and the party proceeded along the hill towards the back part, from which they enjoyed an extensive view across the green labyrinth of the park to the wide-spreading ocean. The view was truly a magnificent one. A slight speck was observed on the horizon, between the dark flood and the

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azure sky. "A telescope!" called out Mr. Jones; but before any of the servants could answer the summons the grey man, with a modest bow, drew his hand from his pocket, and presented a beautiful Dollond's telescope to Mr. Jones, who, on looking through it, informed the company that the speck in the distance was the ship which had sailed yesterday, and which was detained within sight of the haven by contrary winds. The telescope passed from hand to hand, but was not returned to the owner, whom I gazed at with astonishment, and could not conceive how so large an instrument could have proceeded from so small a pocket. This, however, seemed to excite surprise in no one; and the grey man appeared to create as little interest as myself.

Refreshments were now brought forward, consisting of the rarest fruits from all parts of the world, served up in the

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most costly dishes. Mr. Jones did the honours with unaffected grace, and addressed me for the second time, saying, "You had better eat; you did not get such things at sea." I acknowledged his politeness with a bow, which, however, he did not perceive, having turned round to speak with some one else.

The party would willingly have stopped some time here on the declivity of the hill to enjoy the extensive prospect before them, had they not been apprehensive of the dampness of the grass. "How delightful it would be," exclaimed some one, "if we had a Turkey carpet to lay down here!" The wish was scarcely expressed when the man in the grey coat put his hand in his pocket, and, with a modest and even humble air, pulled out a rich Turkey carpet, embroidered in gold. The servant received it as a matter of course, and spread it out on the desired

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spot ; and, without any ceremony, the company seated themselves on it. Confounded by what I saw, I gazed again at the man, his pocket, and the carpet, which was more than twenty feet in length and ten in breadth, and rubbed my eyes, not knowing what to think, particularly as no one saw anything extraordinary in the matter.

I would gladly have made some inquiries respecting the man, and asked who he was, but knew not to whom I should address myself, for I felt almost more afraid of the servants than of their master. At length I took courage, and stepping up to a young man who seemed of less consequence than the others, and who was more frequently standing by himself, I begged of him, in a low tone, to tell me who the obliging gentleman was in the grey cloak. "That man who looks like a piece of thread just escaped from a

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tailor's needle?" "Yes; he who is standing alone yonder." "I do not know," was the reply; and to avoid, as it seemed, any further conversation with me, he turned away, and spoke of some commonplace matters with a neighbour.

The sun's rays now being stronger, the ladies complained of feeling oppressed by the heat; and the lovely Fanny, turning carelessly to the grey man, to whom I had not yet observed that any one had addressed the most trifling question, asked him if, perhaps, he had not a tent about him. He replied with a low bow, as if some unmerited honour had been conferred upon him; and, putting his hand in his pocket, drew from it canvas, poles, cord, iron—in short, everything belonging to the most splendid tent for a party of pleasure. The young gentlemen assisted in pitching it, and it covered the whole carpet, but no one seemed to think

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that there was anything extraordinary in it.

I had long secretly felt uneasy—indeed, almost horrified; but how was this feeling increased when, at the next wish expressed, I saw him take from his pocket three horses! Yes, Adelbert, three large beautiful steeds, with saddles and bridles, out of the very pocket whence had already issued a letter-case, a telescope, a carpet twenty feet broad and ten in length, and a pavilion of the same extent, with all its appurtenances! Did I not assure you that my own eyes had seen all this, you would certainly disbelieve it.

This man, although he appeared so humble and embarrassed in his air and manners, and passed so unheeded, had inspired me with such a feeling of horror by the unearthly paleness of his countenance, from which I could not avert my eyes, that I was unable longer to endure it.

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I determined, therefore, to steal away from the company, which appeared no difficult matter, from the undistinguished part I acted in it. I resolved to return to the town, and pay another visit to Mr. Jones the following morning, and, at the same time, make some inquiries of him relative to the extraordinary man in grey, provided I could command sufficient courage. Would to Heaven that such good fortune had awaited me.

I had stolen safely down the hill, through the thicket of roses, and now found myself on an open plain; but fearing lest I should be met out of the proper path, crossing the grass I cast an inquisitive glance around, and started as I beheld the man in the grey cloak advancing towards me. He took off his hat, and made me a lower bow than mortal had ever yet favoured me with. It was evident that he wished to address

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me, and I could not avoid encountering him without seeming rude. I returned his salutation, therefore, and stood bare-headed in the sunshine, as if rooted to the ground. I gazed at him with the utmost horror, and felt like a bird fascinated by a serpent.

He affected himself to have an air of embarrassment. With his eyes on the ground he bowed several times, drew nearer, and at last, without looking up, addressed me in a low and hesitating voice, almost in the tone of a suppliant, "Will you, sir, excuse my importunity in venturing to intrude upon you in so unusual a manner? I have a request to make—would you most graciously be pleased to allow me—?" "Hold! for Heaven's sake!" I exclaimed; "what can I do for a man who"—I stopped in some confusion, which he seemed to share. After a moment's pause he resumed, "During

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the short time I have had the pleasure to be in your company, I have—permit me, sir, to say—beheld with unspeakable admiration your most beautiful shadow, and remarked the air of noble indifference with which you, at the same time, turn from the glorious picture at your feet, as if disdainingly to vouchsafe a glance at it. Excuse the boldness of my proposal, but perhaps you would have no objection to sell me your shadow?" He stopped, while my head turned round like a mill-wheel. What was I to think of so extraordinary a proposal? To sell my shadow! "He must be mad," thought I; and assuming a tone more in character with the submissiveness of his own, I replied, "My good friend, are you not content with your own shadow? This would be a bargain of a strange nature indeed!"

"I have in my pocket," he said, "many

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things which may possess some value in your eyes; for that inestimable shadow I should deem the highest price too little."

A cold shuddering came over me as I recollected the pocket; and I could not conceive what had induced me to style him "*good friend*," which I took care not to repeat, endeavouring to make up for it by a studied politeness.

I now resumed the conversation: "But, sir,—excuse your humble servant—I am at a loss to comprehend your meaning,—my shadow?—how can I?"

"Permit me," he exclaimed, interrupting me, "to gather up the noble image as it lies on the ground, and to take it into my possession. As to the manner of accomplishing it, leave that to me. In return, and as an evidence of my gratitude, I shall leave you to choose among all the treasures I have in my pocket,

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among which are a variety of enchanting articles, not exactly adapted for you, who, I am sure, would like better to have the wishing-cap of Fortunatus, all made new and sound again, and a lucky purse which also belonged to him."

"Fortunatus's purse!" cried I; and, great as was my mental anguish, with that one word he had penetrated the deepest recesses of my soul. A feeling of giddiness came over me, and double ducats glittered before my eyes.

"Be pleased, gracious sir, to examine this purse, and make a trial of its contents." He put his hand in his pocket, and drew forth a large, strongly stitched bag of stout Cordovan leather, with a couple of strings to match, and presented it to me. I seized it, took out ten gold pieces, then ten more, and this I repeated again and again. Instantly I held out my hand to him. "Done," said I; "the

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bargain is made; my shadow for the purse." "Agreed," he answered; and immediately kneeling down, I beheld him, with extraordinary dexterity, gently loosen my shadow from the grass, lift it up, fold it together, and at last put it in his pocket. He then rose, bowed once more to me, and directed his steps towards the rose-bushes. I fancied I heard him quietly laughing to himself. However, I held the purse fast by the two strings. The earth was basking beneath the brightness of the sun; but I presently lost all consciousness.

On recovering my senses, I hastened to quit a place where I hoped there was nothing further to detain me. I first filled my pockets with gold, then fastened the strings of the purse round my neck, and concealed it in my bosom. I passed unnoticed out of the park, gained the high-road, and took the way to the town.

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As I was thoughtfully approaching the gate, I heard some one behind me exclaiming, "Young man! young man! you have lost your shadow!" I turned, and perceived an old woman calling after me. "Thank you, my good woman," said I; and throwing her a piece of gold for her well-intended information, I stepped under the trees. At the gate, again, it was my fate to hear the sentry inquiring where the gentleman had left his shadow; and immediately I heard a couple of women exclaiming, "Jesu Maria! the poor man has no shadow." All this began to depress me, and I carefully avoided walking in the sun; but this could not everywhere be the case; for in the next broad street I had to cross, and, unfortunately for me, at the very hour in which the boys were coming out of school, a humpbacked lout of a fellow—I see him yet—soon made the discovery that I was

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without a shadow, and communicated the news, with loud outcries, to a knot of young urchins. The whole swarm proceeded immediately to reconnoitre me, and to pelt me with mud. "People," cried they, "are generally accustomed to take their shadows with them when they walk in the sunshine."

In order to drive them away I threw gold by handfuls among them, and sprang into a hackney-coach which some compassionate spectators sent to my rescue.

As soon as I found myself alone in the rolling vehicle I began to weep bitterly. I had by this time a misgiving that, in the same degree in which gold in this world prevails over merit and virtue, by so much one's shadow excels gold; and now that I had sacrificed my conscience for riches, and given my shadow in exchange for mere gold, what on earth would become of me?



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As the coach stopped at the door of my late inn, I felt much perplexed, and not at all disposed to enter so wretched an abode. I called for my things, and received them with an air of contempt, threw down a few gold pieces, and desired to be conducted to a first-rate hotel. This house had a northern aspect, so that I had nothing to fear from the sun. I dismissed the coachman with gold, asked to be conducted to the best apartment, and locked myself up in it as soon as possible.

Imagine, my friend, what I then set about? O my dear Chamisso! even to you I blush to mention what follows.

I drew the ill-fated purse from my bosom; and, in a sort of frenzy that raged like a self-fed fire within me, I took out gold—gold—gold—more and more, till I strewed it on the floor, trampled upon it, and feasting on its very sound and brilliancy, added coins to coins, rolling and

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revelling on the gorgeous bed, until I sank exhausted.

Thus passed away that day and evening ; and as my door remained locked, night found me still lying on the gold, where, at last, sleep overpowered me.

Then I dreamed of you, and fancied I stood behind the glass door of your little room, and saw you seated at your table between a skeleton and a bunch of dried plants ; before you lay open the works of Haller, Humboldt, and Linnæus ; on your sofa a volume of Goethe, and the enchanted Ring. I stood a long time contemplating you, and everything in your apartment ; and again turning my gaze upon you, I perceived that you were motionless—you did not breathe—you were dead.

I awoke—it seemed yet early—my watch had stopped. I felt thirsty, faint, and worn-out, for since the preceding

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morning I had not tasted food. I now cast from me, with loathing and disgust, the very gold with which but a short time before I had satiated my foolish heart. Now I knew not where to put it—I dared not leave it lying there. I examined my purse to see if it would hold it,—impossible! Neither of my windows opened on the sea. I had no other resource but, with toil and great fatigue, to drag it to a huge chest which stood in a closet in my room, where I placed it all, with the exception of a handful or two. Then I threw myself, exhausted, into an arm-chair, till the people of the house should be up and stirring. As soon as possible I sent for some refreshment, and desired to see the landlord.

I entered into some conversation with this man respecting the arrangement of my future establishment. He recommended for my personal attendant one

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Bendel, whose honest and intelligent countenance immediately prepossessed me in his favour. It is this individual whose persevering attachment has consoled me in all the miseries of my life, and enabled me to bear up under my wretched lot. I was occupied the whole day in my room with servants in want of a situation and tradesmen of every description. I decided on my future plans, and purchased various articles of vertu and splendid jewels, in order to get rid of some of my gold; but nothing seemed to diminish the inexhaustible heap.

I now reflected on my situation with the utmost uneasiness. I dared not take a single step beyond my own door; and in the evening I had forty wax tapers lighted before I ventured to leave the shade. I reflected with horror on the frightful encounter with the school-boys; yet I resolved, if I could command

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sufficient courage, to put the public opinion to a second trial. The nights were now moonlight. Late in the evening I wrapped myself in a large cloak, pulled my hat over my eyes, and, trembling like a criminal, stole out of the house.

I did not venture to leave the friendly shadow of the houses until I had reached a distant part of the town; and then I emerged into the broad moonlight, fully prepared to hear my fate from the lips of the passers-by.

Spare me, my beloved friend, the painful recital of all that I was doomed to endure. The women often expressed the deepest sympathy for me—a sympathy not less piercing to my soul than the scoffs of the young people, and the proud contempt of the men, particularly of the more corpulent, who threw an ample shadow before them. A fair and beauteous maiden, apparently accompanied by her parents,

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who gravely kept looking straight before them, chanced to cast a beaming glance on me, but was evidently startled at perceiving that I was without a shadow; and hiding her lovely face in her veil, and holding down her head, passed silently on.

This was past all endurance. Tears streamed from my eyes; and with a heart pierced through and through, I once more took refuge in the shade. I leant on the houses for support, and reached home at a late hour, worn-out with fatigue.

I passed a sleepless night. My first care the following morning was, to devise some means of discovering the man in the grey cloak. Perhaps I may succeed in finding him; and how fortunate it were if he should be as ill satisfied with his bargain as I am with mine!

I desired Bendel to be sent for, who seemed to possess some tact and ability.

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I minutely described to him the individual who possessed a treasure without which life itself was rendered a burden to me. I mentioned the time and place at which I had seen him, named all the persons who were present, and concluded with the following directions:—He was to inquire for a Dollond's telescope, a Turkey carpet interwoven with gold, a marquee, and, finally, for some black steeds—the history, without entering into particulars, of all these being singularly connected with the mysterious character who seemed to pass unnoticed by every one, but whose appearance had destroyed the peace and happiness of my life.

As I spoke I produced as much gold as I could hold in my two hands, and added jewels and precious stones of still greater value. "Bendel," said I, "this smooths many a path, and renders that easy which seems almost impossible. Be not sparing

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of it, for I am not so ; but go, and rejoice your master with intelligence on which depend all his hopes."

He departed, and returned late and melancholy. None of Mr. Jones' servants, none of his guests (and Bendel had spoken to them all) had the slightest recollection of the man in the grey cloak. The new telescope was still there, but no one knew how it had come ; and the tent and Turkey carpet were still stretched out on the hill. The servants boasted of their master's wealth ; but no one seemed to know by what means he had become possessed of these newly-acquired luxuries. He was gratified ; and it gave him no concern to be ignorant how they had come to him. The black coursers which had been mounted on that day were in the stables of the young gentlemen of the party, who admired them as the munificent present of Mr. Jones.

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Such was the information I gained from Bendel's detailed account ; but in spite of this unsatisfactory result, his zeal and prudence deserved and received my commendation. In a gloomy mood, I made him a sign to withdraw.

"I have, sir," he continued, "laid before you all the information in my power relative to the subject of the most importance to you. I have now a message to deliver which I received early this morning from a person at the gate, as I was proceeding to execute the commission in which I have so unfortunately failed. The man's words were precisely these: 'Tell your master, Peter Schlemihl, he will not see me here again. I am going to cross the sea ; a favourable wind now calls all the passengers on board ; but in a year and a day I shall have the honour of paying him a visit ; when, in all probability, I shall have a proposal to make to him of a very

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agreeable nature. Commend me to him most respectfully, with many thanks.' I inquired his name, but he said you would remember him."

"What sort of person was he?" cried I, in great emotion; and Bendel described the man in the grey coat feature by feature, word for word; in short, the very individual in search of whom he had been sent. "How unfortunate!" cried I bitterly; "it was himself." Scales, as it were, fell from Bendel's eyes. "Yes, it was he," cried he; "undoubtedly it was he; and fool, madman that I was, I did not recognise him—I did not, and have betrayed my master!" He then broke out into a torrent of self-reproach; and his distress really excited my compassion. I endeavoured to console him, repeatedly assuring him that I entertained no doubt of his fidelity; and despatched him immediately to the wharf, to discover, if possible, some

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trace of the extraordinary being. But on that very morning many vessels which had been detained in port by contrary winds had set sail, all bound to different parts of the globe; and the grey man had disappeared like a shadow.

CHAPTER II

OF what use were wings to a man fast bound in chains of iron? They would but increase the horror of his despair. Like the dragon guarding his treasure, I remained cut off from all human intercourse, and starving amidst my very gold, for it gave me no pleasure: I anathematised it as the source of all my wretchedness.

Sole depository of my fearful secret, I trembled before the meanest of my attendants, whom, at the same time, I envied; for he possessed a shadow, and could venture to go out in the daytime; while I shut myself up in my room day and night, and indulged in all the bitterness of grief.

One individual, however, was daily

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pinning away before my eyes—my faithful Bendel, who was the victim of silent self-reproach, tormenting himself with the idea that he had betrayed the confidence reposed in him by a good master, in failing to recognise the individual in quest of whom he had been sent, and with whom he had been led to believe that my melancholy fate was closely connected. Still, I had nothing to accuse him with, as I recognised in the occurrence the mysterious character of the unknown.

In order to leave no means untried, I one day despatched Bendel with a costly ring to the most celebrated artist in the town, desiring him to wait upon me. He came; and, dismissing the attendants, I secured the door, placing myself opposite to him, and, after extolling his art, with a heavy heart came to the point, first enjoining the strictest secrecy.

“For a person,” said I, “who most

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unfortunately has lost his shadow, could you paint a false one?"

"Do you speak of the natural shadow?"

"Precisely so."

"But," he asked, "by what awkward negligence can a man have lost his shadow?"

"How it occurred," I answered, "is of no consequence; but it was in this manner"—(and here I uttered an unblushing falsehood)—"he was travelling in Russia last winter, and one bitterly cold day it froze so intensely, that his shadow remained so fixed to the ground, that it was found impossible to remove it."

"The false shadow that I might paint," said the artist, "would be liable to be lost on the slightest movement, particularly in a person who, from your account, cares so little about his shadow. A person without a shadow should keep out of the sun; that is the only safe and rational plan."

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He rose and took his leave, casting so penetrating a look at me that I shrunk from it. I sank back in my chair, and hid my face in my hands.

In this attitude Bendel found me, and was about to withdraw silently and respectfully on seeing me in such a state of grief. Looking up, overwhelmed with my sorrows, I felt that I must communicate them to him. “Bendel,” I exclaimed—“Bendel, you, the only being who sees and respects my grief too much to inquire into its cause—you, who seem silently and sincerely to sympathise with me—come and share my confidence. The extent of my wealth I have not withheld from you, neither will I conceal from you the extent of my grief. Bendel! forsake me not. Bendel, you see me rich, free, beneficent; you fancy all the world in my power; yet you must have observed that I shun it, and avoid all human intercourse. You

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think, Bendel, that the world and I are at variance; and you yourself, perhaps, will abandon me when I acquaint you with this fearful secret. Bendel, I am rich, free, generous; but, O God, I have *no shadow!*"

"No shadow!" exclaimed the faithful young man, tears starting from his eyes. "Alas! that I am born to serve a master without a shadow!" He was silent, and again I hid my face in my hands.

"Bendel," at last I tremblingly resumed, "you have now my confidence; you may betray me—go—bear witness against me!"

He seemed to be agitated with conflicting feelings; at last he threw himself at my feet and seized my hand, which he bathed with his tears. "No," he exclaimed; "whatever the world may say, I neither can nor will forsake my excellent master because he has lost his shadow. I will rather do what is right than what may

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seem prudent. I will remain with you—I will shade you with my own shadow—I will assist you when I can—and when I cannot, I will weep with you.”

I fell upon his neck, astonished at sentiments so unusual; for it was very evident that he was not prompted by the love of money.

My mode of life and my fate now became somewhat different. It is incredible with what provident foresight Bendel contrived to conceal my deficiency. Everywhere he was before me and with me, providing against every contingency, and in cases of unlooked-for danger flying to shield me with his own shadow, for he was taller and stouter than myself. Thus I once more ventured among mankind, and began to take a part in worldly affairs. I was compelled, indeed, to affect certain peculiarities and whims; but in a rich man they seem only appropriate; and so

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long as the truth was kept concealed I enjoyed all the honour and respect which gold could procure.

I now looked forward with more composure to the promised visit of the mysterious unknown at the expiration of the year and a day.

I was very sensible that I could not venture to remain long in a place where I had once been seen without a shadow, and where I might easily be betrayed; and perhaps, too, I recollected my first introduction to Mr. Jones, and this was by no means a pleasing reminiscence. However, I wished just to make a trial here, that I might with greater ease and security visit some other place. But my vanity for some time withheld me, for it is in this quality of our race that the anchor takes the firmest hold.

Even the lovely Fanny, whom I again met in several places, without her seeming

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to recollect that she had ever seen me before, bestowed some notice on me; for wit and understanding were mine in abundance now. When I spoke, I was listened to; and I was at a loss to know how I had so easily acquired the art of commanding attention, and giving the tone to the conversation.

The impression which I perceived I had made upon this fair one completely turned my brain; and this was just what she wished. After that, I pursued her with infinite pains through every obstacle. My vanity was only intent on exciting hers to make a conquest of me; but although the intoxication disturbed my head, it failed to make the least impression on my heart.

But why detail to you the oft-repeated story which I have so often heard from yourself?

However, in the old and well-known

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drama in which I played so worn-out a part a catastrophe occurred of quite a peculiar nature, in a manner equally unexpected to her, to me, and to everybody.

One beautiful evening I had, according to my usual custom, assembled a party in a garden, and was walking arm-in-arm with Fanny at a little distance from the rest of the company, and pouring into her ear the usual well-turned phrases, while she was demurely gazing on vacancy, and now and then gently returning the pressure of my hand. The moon suddenly emerged from behind a cloud at our back. Fanny perceived only her own shadow before us. She started, looked at me with terror, and then again on the ground in search of my shadow. All that was passing in her mind was so strangely depicted in her countenance, that I should have burst into a loud fit of laughter had I not suddenly felt my blood run cold within me. I





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suffered her to fall from my arm in a fainting-fit, shot with the rapidity of an arrow through the astonished guests, reached the gate, threw myself into the first conveyance I met with, and returned to the town, where this time, unfortunately, I had left the wary Bendel. He was alarmed on seeing me: one word explained all. Post-horses were immediately procured. I took with me none of my servants, one cunning knave only excepted, called Rascal, who had by his adroitness become very serviceable to me, and who at present knew nothing of what had occurred. I travelled thirty leagues that night; having left Bendel behind to discharge my servants, pay my debts, and bring me all that was necessary.

When he came up with me next day I threw myself into his arms, vowing to avoid such follies and to be more careful for the future.

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We pursued our journey uninterruptedly over the frontiers and mountains; and it was not until I had placed this lofty barrier between myself and the before-mentioned unlucky town that I was persuaded to recruit myself after my fatigues in a neighbouring and little-frequented watering-place.

I must now pass rapidly over one period of my history, on which how gladly would I dwell could I conjure up your lively powers of delineation! But the vivid hues which are at your command, and which alone can give life and animation to the picture, have left no trace within me; and were I now to endeavour to recall the joys, the griefs, the pure and enchanting emotions which once held such powerful dominion in my breast, it would be like striking a rock which yields no longer the living spring, and whose spirit has fled for

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ever. With what an altered aspect do those bygone days now present themselves to my gaze !

In this watering-place I acted an heroic character, badly studied ; and being a novice on such a stage, I forgot my part before a pair of lovely blue eyes.

All possible means were used by the infatuated parents to conclude the bargain ; and deception put an end to these usual artifices. And that is all—all.

The powerful emotions which once swelled my bosom seem now in the retrospect to be poor and insipid, nay, even terrible to me.

Alas, Minna ! as I wept for you the day I lost you, so do I now weep that I can no longer retrace your image in my soul.

Am I, then, so far advanced into the vale of years ? O fatal effects of maturity ! would that I could feel one throb, one

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emotion of former days of enchantment—alas, not one! a solitary being, tossed on the wild ocean of life—it is long since I drained thine enchanted cup to the dregs!

But to return to my narrative. I had sent Bendel to the little town with plenty of money to procure me a suitable habitation. He spent my gold profusely; and as he expressed himself rather reservedly concerning his distinguished master (for I did not wish to be named), the good people began to form rather extraordinary conjectures.

As soon as my house was ready for my reception, Bendel returned to conduct me to it. We set out on our journey. About a league from the town, on a sunny plain, we were stopped by a crowd of people, arrayed in holiday attire for some festival. The carriage stopped. Music, bells, cannons were heard, and loud acclamations rang through the air.

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Before the carriage now appeared in white dresses a chorus of maidens, all of extraordinary beauty; but one of them shone in resplendent loveliness, and eclipsed the rest as the sun eclipses the stars at night. She advanced from the midst of her companions, and, with a lofty yet winning air, blushingly knelt before me, presenting on a silken cushion a wreath, composed of laurel branches, the olive, and the rose, saying something respecting majesty, love, honour, &c., which I could not comprehend; but the sweet and silvery magic of her tones intoxicated my senses and my whole soul: it seemed as if some heavenly apparition were hovering over me. The chorus now began to sing the praises of a good sovereign, and the happiness of his subjects. All this, dear Chamisso, took place in the sun: she was kneeling two steps from me, and I, without a shadow, could not dart

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through the air, nor fall on my knees before the angelic being. Oh, what would I not now have given for a shadow! To conceal my shame, agony, and despair, I buried myself in the recesses of the carriage. Bendel at last thought of an expedient; he jumped out of the carriage. I called him back, and gave him out of the casket I had by me a rich diamond coronet, which had been intended for the lovely Fanny.

He stepped forward, and spoke in the name of his master, who, he said, was overwhelmed by so many demonstrations of respect, which he really could not accept as an honour—there must be some error; nevertheless he begged to express his thanks for the goodwill of the worthy townspeople. In the meantime Bendel had taken the wreath from the cushion, and laid the brilliant crown in its place. He then respectfully raised the lovely girl



John and the Snow of the North

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from the ground ; and, at one sign, the clergy, magistrates, and all the deputations withdrew. The crowd separated to allow the horses to pass, and we pursued our way to the town at full gallop, through arches ornamented with flowers and branches of laurel. Salvoes of artillery again were heard. The carriage stopped at my gate ; I hastened through the crowd which curiosity had attracted to witness my arrival. Enthusiastic shouts resounded under my windows, from whence I showered gold amidst the people ; and in the evening the whole town was illuminated. Still all remained a mystery to me, and I could not imagine for whom I had been taken. I sent Rascal out to make inquiry ; and he soon obtained intelligence that the good King of Prussia was travelling through the country under the name of some count ; that my *aide-de-camp* had been recognised, and that he had divulged

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the secret ; that on acquiring the certainty that I would enter their town, their joy had known no bounds : however, as they perceived I was determined on preserving the strictest *incognito*, they felt how wrong they had been in too importunately seeking to withdraw the veil ; but I had received them so condescendingly and so graciously, that they were sure I would forgive them. The whole affair was such capital amusement to the unprincipled Rascal, that he did his best to confirm the good people in their belief, while affecting to reprove them. He gave me a very comical account of the matter ; and, seeing that I was amused by it, actually endeavoured to make a merit of his impudence.

Shall I own the truth ? My vanity was flattered by having been mistaken for our revered sovereign. I ordered a banquet to be got ready for the following evening, under the trees before my house, and

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invited the whole town. The mysterious power of my purse, Bendel's exertions, and Rascal's ready invention, made the shortness of the time seem as nothing.

It was really astonishing how magnificently and beautifully everything was arranged in these few hours. Splendour and abundance vied with each other, and the lights were so carefully arranged that I felt quite safe : the zeal of my servants met every exigency and merited all praise.

Evening drew on, the guests arrived, and were presented to me. The word *majesty* was now dropped ; but, with the deepest respect and humility, I was addressed as the *count*. What could I do ? I accepted the title, and from that moment I was known as Count Peter. In the midst of all this festivity my soul pined for one individual. She came late—she who was the empress of the scene, and wore the emblem of sovereignty on her brow.

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She modestly accompanied her parents, and seemed unconscious of her transcendent beauty.

The Ranger of the Forests, his wife, and daughter, were presented to me. I was at no loss to make myself agreeable to the parents; but before the daughter I stood like a well-scolded schoolboy, incapable of speaking a single word.

At length I hesitatingly entreated her to honour my banquet by presiding at it—an office for which her rare endowments pointed her out as admirably fitted. With a blush and an expressive glance she entreated to be excused; but, in still greater confusion than herself, I respectfully begged her to accept the homage of the first and most devoted of her subjects, and one glance of the count was the same as a command to the guests, who all vied with each other in acting up to the spirit of the noble host.

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In her person majesty, innocence, and grace, in union with beauty, presided over this joyous banquet. Minna's happy parents were elated by the honours conferred upon their child. As for me, I abandoned myself to all the intoxication of delight : I sent for all the jewels, pearls, and precious stones still left to me—the produce of my fatal wealth—and, filling two vases, I placed them on the table, in the name of the Queen of the banquet, to be divided among her companions and the remainder of the ladies.

I ordered gold in the meantime to be showered down without ceasing among the happy multitude.

Next morning Bendel told me in confidence that the suspicions he had long entertained of Rascal's honesty were now reduced to a certainty ; he had yesterday embezzled many bags of gold.

“Never mind,” said I ; “let him enjoy

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his paltry booty. *I* like to spend it; why should not he? Yesterday he, and all the newly-engaged servants whom you had hired, served me honourably, and cheerfully assisted me to enjoy the banquet."

No more was said on the subject. Rascal remained at the head of my domestics. Bendel was my friend and confidant; he had by this time become accustomed to look upon my wealth as inexhaustible, without seeking to inquire into its source. He entered into all my schemes, and effectually assisted me in devising methods of spending my money.

Of the pale, sneaking scoundrel—the unknown—Bendel only knew thus much, that he alone had power to release me from the curse which weighed so heavily on me, and yet that I stood in awe of him on whom all my hopes rested. Besides, I felt convinced that he had the means of discovering *me* under any circumstances,

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while he himself remained concealed. I therefore abandoned my fruitless inquiries, and patiently awaited the appointed day.

The magnificence of my banquet, and my deportment on the occasion, had but strengthened the credulous townspeople in their previous belief.

It appeared soon after, from accounts in the newspapers, that the whole history of the King of Prussia's fictitious journey originated in mere idle report. But a king I was, and a king I must remain by all means; and one of the richest and most royal, although people were at a loss to know where my territories lay.

The world has never had reason to lament the scarcity of monarchs, particularly in these days; and the good people, who had never yet seen a king, now fancied me to be first one, and then another, with equal success; and in the meanwhile I remained as before, Count Peter.

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Among the visitors at this watering-place a merchant made his appearance, one who had become a bankrupt in order to enrich himself. He enjoyed the general good opinion; for he projected a shadow of respectable size, though of somewhat faint hue.

This man wished to show off in this place by means of his wealth, and sought to rival me. My purse soon enabled me to leave the poor devil far behind. To save his credit he became bankrupt again, and fled beyond the mountains; and thus I was rid of him. Many a one in this place was reduced to beggary and ruin through my means.

In the midst of the really princely magnificence and profusion, which carried all before me, my own style of living was very simple and retired. I had made it a point to observe the strictest precaution; and, with the exception of Bendel, no one

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was permitted, on any pretence whatever, to enter my private apartment. As long as the sun shone I remained shut up with him; and the Count was then said to be deeply occupied in his closet. The numerous couriers, whom I kept in constant attendance about matters of no importance, were supposed to be the bearers of my despatches. I only received company in the evening under the trees of my garden, or in my saloons, after Bendel's assurance of their being carefully and brilliantly lit up.

My walks, in which the Argus-eyed Bendel was constantly on the watch for me, extended only to the garden of the forest-ranger, to enjoy the society of one who was dear to me as my own existence.

Oh, my Chamisso! I trust you have not forgotten what love is! I must here leave much to your imagination. Minna was in truth an amiable and excellent

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maiden : her whole soul was wrapped up in me, and in her lowly thoughts of herself she could not imagine how she had deserved a single thought from me. She returned love for love with all the full and youthful fervour of an innocent heart; her love was a true woman's love, with all the devotion and total absence of selfishness which is found only in woman; she lived but in me, her whole soul being bound up in mine, regardless what her own fate might be.

Yet I, alas, during those hours of wretchedness—hours I would even now gladly recall—how often have I wept on Bendel's bosom, when after the first mad whirlwind of passion I reflected, with the keenest self-upbraidings, that I, a shadowless man, had, with cruel selfishness, practised a wicked deception, and stolen away the pure and angelic heart of the innocent Minna !

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At one moment I resolved to confess all to her; then that I would fly for ever; then I broke out into a flood of bitter tears, and consulted Bendel as to the means of meeting her again in the forester's garden.

At times I flattered myself with great hopes from the near approaching visit of the unknown; then wept again, because I saw clearly on reflection that they would end in disappointment. I had made a calculation of the day fixed on by the fearful being for our interview; for he had said in a year and a day, and I depended on his word.

The parents were worthy old people, devoted to their only child; and our mutual affection was a circumstance so overwhelming that they knew not how to act. They had never dreamed for a moment that the *Count* could bestow a thought on their daughter; but such was the case—he loved

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and was beloved. The pride of the mother might not have led her to consider such an alliance quite impossible, but so extravagant an idea had never entered the contemplation of the sounder judgment of the old man. Both were satisfied of the sincerity of my love, and could but put up prayers to Heaven for the happiness of their child.

A letter which I received from Minna about that time has just fallen into my hands. Yes, these are the characters traced by her own hand. I will transcribe the letter :—

“I am indeed a weak, foolish girl to fancy that the friend I so tenderly love could give an instant’s pain to his poor Minna! Oh no! you are so good, so inexpressibly good! But do not misunderstand me. I will accept no sacrifice at your hands—none whatever. Oh, heavens! I should hate myself! No; you have made

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me happy, you have taught me to love you.

“Go, then—let me not forget my destiny—Count Peter belongs not to me, but to the whole world; and oh! what pride for your Minna to hear your deeds proclaimed, and blessings invoked on your idolised head! Ah! when I think of this I could chide you that you should for one instant forget your high destiny for the sake of a simple maiden! Go, then; otherwise the reflection will pierce me. How blest I have been rendered by your love! Perhaps, also, I have planted some flowers in the path of your life, as I twined them in the wreath which I presented to you.

“Go, then—fear not to leave me—you are too deeply seated in my heart—I shall die inexpressibly happy in your love.”

Conceive how these words pierced my soul, Chamisso!

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I declared to her that I was not what I seemed—that, although a rich, I was an unspeakably miserable man—that a curse was on me, which must remain a secret, although the only one between us—yet that I was not without a hope of its being removed—that this poisoned every hour of my life—that I should plunge her with me into the abyss—she, the light and joy, the very soul of my existence. Then she wept because I was unhappy. Oh ! Minna was all love and tenderness. To save me one tear she would gladly have sacrificed her life. Yet she was far from comprehending the full meaning of my words. She still looked upon me as some proscribed prince or illustrious exile ; and her vivid imagination had invested her lover with every lofty attribute.

One day I said to her, “ Minna, the last day in next month will decide my fate, and perhaps change it for the better ; if

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not, I would sooner die than render you miserable."

She laid her head on my shoulder to conceal her tears. "Should your fate be changed," she said, "I only wish to know that you are happy; if your condition is an unhappy one, I will share it with you, and assist you to support it."

"Minna, Minna!" I exclaimed, "recall those rash words—those mad words which have escaped your lips! Did you know the misery and curse—did you know who—what—your lover . . . Do you not see, my Minna, this convulsive shuddering which thrills my whole frame, and that there is a secret in my breast which you cannot penetrate?" She sank sobbing at my feet, and renewed her vows and entreaties.

Her father now entered, and I declared to him my intention to solicit the hand of his daughter on the first day of the month

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after the ensuing one. I fixed that time, I told him, because circumstances might probably occur in the interval materially to influence my future destiny; but my love for his daughter was unchangeable.

The good old man started at hearing such words from the mouth of Count Peter. He fell upon my neck, and rose again in the utmost confusion for having forgotten himself. Then he began to doubt, to ponder, and to scrutinise; and spoke of dowry, security, and future provision for his beloved child. I thanked him for having reminded me of all this, and told him it was my wish to remain in a country where I seemed to be beloved, and to lead a life free from anxiety. I then commissioned him to purchase the finest estate in the neighbourhood in the name of his daughter—for a father was the best person to act for his daughter in such a case—and to refer for payment to

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me. This occasioned him a good deal of trouble, as a stranger had everywhere anticipated him; but at last he made a purchase for about £150,000.

I confess this was but an innocent artifice to get rid of him, as I had frequently done before; for it must be confessed that he was somewhat tedious. The good mother was rather deaf, and not jealous, like her husband, of the honour of conversing with the Count.

The happy party pressed me to remain with them longer this evening. I dared not—I had not a moment to lose. I saw the rising moon streaking the horizon—my hour was come.

Next evening I went again to the forester's garden. I had wrapped myself closely up in my cloak, slouched my hat over my eyes, and advanced towards Minna. As she raised her head and looked at me, she started involuntarily.

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The apparition of that dreadful night in which I had been seen without a shadow was now standing distinctly before me—it was she herself. Had she recognised me? She was silent and thoughtful. I felt an oppressive load at my heart. I rose from my seat. She laid her head on my shoulder, still silent and in tears. I went away.

I now found her frequently weeping. I became more and more melancholy. Her parents were beyond expression happy. The eventful day approached, threatening and heavy, like a thunder cloud. The evening preceding arrived. I could scarcely breathe. I had carefully filled a large chest with gold, and sat down to await the appointed time—the twelfth hour—it struck.

Now I remained with my eyes fixed on the hand of the clock, counting the seconds—the minutes—which struck me

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to the heart like daggers. I started at every sound—at last daylight appeared. The leaden hours passed on—morning—evening—night came. Hope was fast fading away as the hand advanced. It struck eleven—no one appeared—the last minutes—the first and last stroke of the twelfth hour died away. I sank back in my bed in an agony of weeping. In the morning I should, shadowless as I was, claim the hand of my beloved Minna. A heavy sleep towards daylight closed my eyes.

CHAPTER III

IT was yet early when I was suddenly awoke by voices in hot dispute in my antechamber. I listened. Bendel was forbidding Rascal to enter my room, who swore he would receive no orders from his equals, and insisted on forcing his way. The faithful Bendel reminded him that if such words reached his master's ears, he would turn him out of an excellent place. Rascal threatened to strike him if he persisted in refusing his entrance.

By this time, having half dressed myself, I angrily threw open the door, and addressing myself to Rascal, inquired what he meant by such disgraceful conduct. He drew back a couple of steps, and coolly answered, "Count Peter, may I beg most respectfully that you will favour

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me with a sight of your shadow? The sun is now shining brightly in the court below."

I stood as if struck by a thunderbolt, and for some time was unable to speak. At last I asked him how a servant could dare to behave so towards his master. He interrupted me by saying, quite coolly, "A servant may be a very honourable man, and unwilling to serve a shadowless master—I request my dismissal."

I felt that I must adopt a softer tone, and replied, "But, Rascal, my good fellow, who can have put such strange ideas into your head? How can you imagine——"

He again interrupted me in the same tone—"People say you have no shadow. In short, let me see your shadow, or give me my dismissal."

Bendel, pale and trembling, but more collected than myself, made a sign to me. I had recourse to the all-powerful

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influence of gold. But even gold had lost its power — Rascal threw it at my feet : “From a shadowless man,” he said, “I will take nothing.”

Turning his back upon me, and putting on his hat, he then slowly left the room, whistling a tune. I stood, with Bendel, as if petrified, gazing after him.

With a deep sigh and a heavy heart I now prepared to keep my engagement, and to appear in the forester’s garden like a criminal before his judge. I entered by the shady arbour, which had received the name of Count Peter’s arbour, where we had appointed to meet. The mother advanced with a cheerful air ; Minna sat fair and beautiful as the early snow of autumn reposing on the departing flowers, soon to be dissolved and lost in the cold stream.

The ranger, with a written paper in his hand, was walking up and down in an

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agitated manner, and struggling to suppress his feelings—his usually unmoved countenance being one moment flushed, and the next perfectly pale. He came forward as I entered, and, in a faltering voice, requested a private conversation with me. The path by which he requested me to follow him led to an open spot in the garden, where the sun was shining. I sat down. A long silence ensued, which even the good woman herself did not venture to break. The ranger, in an agitated manner, paced up and down with unequal steps. At last he stood still; and glancing over the paper he held in his hand, he said, addressing me with a penetrating look, “Count Peter, do you know one Peter Schlemihl?” I was silent.

“A man,” he continued, “of excellent character and extraordinary endowments.”

He paused for an answer.—“And supposing I myself were that very man?”

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“You!” he exclaimed passionately; “he has lost his shadow!”

“Oh, my suspicion is true!” cried Minna; “I have long known it—he has no shadow!” And she threw herself into her mother’s arms, who, convulsively clasping her to her bosom, reproached her for having so long, to her hurt, kept such a secret. But, like the fabled Arethusa, her tears, as from a fountain, flowed more abundantly, and her sobs increased at my approach.

“And so,” said the ranger fiercely, “you have not scrupled, with unparalleled shamelessness, to deceive both her and me; and you pretended to love her, forsooth!—her whom you have reduced to the state in which you now see her. See how she weeps!—Oh, shocking, shocking!”

By this time I had lost all presence of mind, and I answered confusedly, “After all, it is but a shadow, a mere shadow,

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which a man can do very well without; and really it is not worth the while to make all this noise about such a trifle." Feeling the groundlessness of what I was saying, I ceased, and no one condescended to reply. At last I added, "What is lost to-day may be found to-morrow."

"Be pleased, sir," continued the ranger, in great wrath—"be pleased to explain how you have lost your shadow."

Here again an excuse was ready: "A boor of a fellow," said I, "one day trod so rudely on my shadow that he tore a large hole in it. I sent it to be repaired—for gold can do wonders—and yesterday I expected it home again."

"Very well," answered the ranger. "You are a suitor for my daughter's hand, and so are others. As a father, I am bound to provide for her. I will give you three days to seek your shadow. Return to me in the course of that time

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with a well-fitted shadow, and you shall receive a hearty welcome; otherwise, on the fourth day—remember, on the fourth day—my daughter becomes the wife of another.”

I now attempted to say one word to Minna; but, sobbing more violently, she clung still closer to her mother, who made a sign for me to withdraw. I obeyed; and now the world seemed shut out from me for ever.

Having escaped from the affectionate care of Bendel, I now wandered wildly through the neighbouring woods and meadows. Drops of anguish fell from my brow, deep groans burst from my bosom—frenzied despair raged within me.

I knew not how long this had lasted, when I felt myself seized by the sleeve on a sunny heath. I stopped, and looking up, beheld the grey-coated man, who appeared to have run himself out of breath

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in pursuing me. He immediately began : “I had,” said he, “appointed this day; but your impatience anticipated it. All, however, may yet be right. Take my advice—redeem your shadow, which is at your command, and return immediately to the ranger’s garden, where you will be well received, and all the past will seem a mere joke. As for Rascal—who has betrayed you in order to pay his addresses to Minna—leave him to me; he is just a fit subject for me.”

I stood like one in a dream. “This day?” I considered again. He was right—I had made a mistake of a day. I felt in my bosom for the purse. He perceived my intention, and drew back.

“No, Count Peter; the purse is in good hands—pray keep it.” I gazed at him with looks of astonishment and inquiry. “I only beg a trifle as a token of remembrance. Be so good as to sign

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this memorandum." On the parchment, which he held out to me, were these words: "By virtue of this present, to which I have appended my signature, I hereby bequeath my soul to the holder, after its natural separation from my body."

I gazed in mute astonishment alternately at the paper and the grey unknown. In the meantime he had dipped a new pen in a drop of blood which was issuing from a scratch in my hand just made by a thorn. He presented it to me. "Who are you?" at last I exclaimed. "What can it signify?" he answered; "do you not perceive who I am? A poor devil—a sort of scholar and philosopher, who obtains but poor thanks from his friends for his admirable arts, and whose only amusement on earth consists in his small experiments. But just sign this; to the right, exactly underneath—Peter Schlemihl."

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I shook my head, and replied, "Excuse me, sir; I cannot sign that."

"Cannot!" he exclaimed; "and why not?"

"Because it appears to me a hazardous thing to exchange my soul for my shadow."

"Hazardous!" he exclaimed, bursting into a loud laugh. "And pray, may I be allowed to inquire what sort of a thing your soul is?—have you ever seen it?—and what do you mean to do with it after your death? You ought to think yourself fortunate in meeting with a customer who, during your life, in exchange for this infinitely minute quantity, this galvanic principle, this polarised agency, or whatever other foolish name you may give it, is willing to bestow on you something substantial—in a word, your own identical shadow—by virtue of which you will obtain your beloved Minna, and arrive at

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the accomplishment of all your wishes ; or do you prefer giving up the poor young girl to the power of that contemptible scoundrel Rascal ? Nay, you shall behold her with your own eyes. Come here ; I will lend you an invisible cap (he drew something out of his pocket), and we will enter the ranger's garden unseen."

I must confess that I felt excessively ashamed to be thus laughed at by the grey stranger. I detested him from the very bottom of my soul ; and I really believe this personal antipathy, more than principle or previously-formed opinion, restrained me from purchasing my shadow, much as I stood in need of it, at such an expense. Besides, the thought was insupportable of making this proposed visit in his society. To behold this hateful sneak, this mocking fiend, place himself between me and my beloved, between our torn and bleeding hearts, was too revolting an

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idea to be entertained for a moment. I considered the past as irrevocable, my own misery as inevitable; and turning to the grey man, I said, "I have exchanged my shadow for this very extraordinary purse, and I have sufficiently repented it. For Heaven's sake, let the transaction be declared null and void!" He shook his head, and his countenance assumed an expression of the most sinister cast. I continued, "I will make no exchange whatever, even for the sake of my shadow, nor will I sign the paper. It follows, also, that the incognito visit you propose to me would afford you far more entertainment than it could possibly give me. Accept my excuses, therefore; and, since it must be so, let us part."

"I am sorry, Mr. Schlemihl, that you thus obstinately persist in rejecting my friendly offer. Perhaps another time I may be more fortunate. Farewell! May

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we shortly meet again! But, *à propos*, allow me to show you that I do not undervalue my purchase, but preserve it carefully.”

So saying, he drew my shadow out of his pocket; and shaking it cleverly out of its folds, he stretched it out at his feet in the sun—so that he stood between two obedient shadows, his own and mine, which was compelled to follow and comply with his every movement.

On again beholding my poor shadow after so long a separation, and seeing it degraded to so vile a bondage at the very time that I was so unspeakably in want of it, my heart was ready to burst, and I wept bitterly. The detested wretch stood exulting over his prey, and unblushingly renewed his proposal. “One stroke of your pen, and the unhappy Minna is rescued from the clutches of the villain Rascal, and transferred to the arms of the



John Allen

So stand before the silent shadows, his own & mine.



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high-born Count Peter—merely a stroke of your pen!”

My tears broke out with renewed violence; but I turned away from him, and made a sign for him to be gone.

Bendel, whose deep solicitude had induced him to come in search of me, arrived at this very moment. The good and faithful creature, on seeing me weeping, and that a shadow (evidently mine) was in the power of the mysterious unknown, determined to rescue it by force, should that be necessary; and disdaining to use any finesse, he desired him directly, and without any disputing, to restore my property. Instead of a reply, the grey man turned his back on the worthy fellow and was making off. But Bendel raised his buckthorn stick; and following close upon him, after repeated commands, but in vain, to restore the shadow, he made him feel the whole force of his powerful

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arm. The grey man, as if accustomed to such treatment, held down his head, slouched his shoulders, and, with short and noiseless steps, pursued his way over the heath, carrying with him my shadow, and also my faithful servant. For a long time I heard hollow sounds ringing through the waste, until at last they died away in the distance, and I was again left to solitude and misery.

Alone on the wild heath, I disburdened my heart of an insupportable load by giving free vent to my tears. But I saw no bounds, no relief, to my surpassing wretchedness; and I drank in the fresh poison which the mysterious stranger had poured into my wounds with a furious avidity. As I retraced in my mind the loved image of my Minna, and depicted her sweet countenance all pale and in tears, such as I had beheld her in my late

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disgrace, the bold and sarcastic visage of Rascal would ever and anon thrust itself between us. I hid my face, and fled rapidly over the plains; but the horrible vision unrelentingly pursued me, till at last I sank breathless on the ground, and bedewed it with a fresh torrent of tears—and all this for a shadow!—a shadow which one stroke of the pen would repurchase. I pondered on the singular proposal, and on my hesitation to comply with it. My mind was confused—I had lost the power of judging or comprehending. The day was waning apace. I satisfied the cravings of hunger with a few wild fruits, and quenched my thirst at a neighbouring stream. Night came on; I threw myself down under a tree, and was awoke by the damp morning air from an uneasy sleep, in which I had fancied myself struggling in the agonies of death. Bendel had certainly lost all trace of me,

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and I was glad of it. I did not wish to return among my fellow-creatures—I shunned them as the hunted deer flies before its pursuers. Thus I passed three melancholy days.

I found myself on the morning of the fourth on a sandy plain, basking in the rays of the sun, and sitting on a fragment of rock; for it was sweet to enjoy the genial warmth of which I had so long been deprived. Despair still preyed on my heart. Suddenly a slight sound startled me; I looked round, prepared to fly, but saw no one. On the sunlit sand before me flitted the shadow of a man not unlike my own; and wandering about alone, it seemed to have lost its master. This sight powerfully excited me. “Shadow!” thought I, “art thou in search of thy master? in me thou shalt find him.” And I sprang forward to seize it, fancying that could I succeed in treading so exactly in



By P. Burne-Jones

John Allen

"Before me flitted the shadow of a man."



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its traces as to step in its footmarks, it would attach itself to me, and in time become accustomed to me, and follow all my movements.

The shadow, as I moved, took to flight, and I commenced a hot chase after the airy fugitive, solely excited by the hope of being delivered from my present dreadful situation ; the bare idea inspired me with fresh strength and vigour.

The shadow now fled towards a distant wood, among whose shades I must necessarily have lost it. Seeing this, my heart beat wild with fright, my ardour increased and lent wings to my speed. I was evidently gaining on the shadow—I came nearer and nearer—I was within reach of it, when it suddenly stopped and turned towards me. Like a lion darting on its prey I made a powerful spring and fell unexpectedly upon a hard substance. Then followed, from an invisible hand, the most

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terrible blows in the ribs that any one ever received. The effect of my terror made me endeavour convulsively to strike and grasp at the unseen object before me. The rapidity of my motions brought me to the ground, where I lay stretched out with a man under me, whom I held tight, and who now became visible.

The whole affair was now explained. The man had undoubtedly possessed the bird's nest which communicates its charm of invisibility to its possessor, though not equally so to his shadow; and this nest he had now thrown away. I looked all round, and soon discovered the shadow of this invisible nest. I sprang towards it, and was fortunate enough to seize the precious booty, and immediately became invisible and shadowless.

The moment the man regained his feet he looked all round over the wide sunny plain to discover his fortunate vanquisher,

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but could see neither him nor his shadow, the latter seeming particularly to be the object of his search ; for previous to our encounter he had not had leisure to observe that I was shadowless, and he could not be aware of it. Becoming convinced that all traces of me were lost, he began to tear his hair, and give himself up to all the frenzy of despair. In the meantime, this newly acquired treasure communicated to me both the ability and the desire to mix again among mankind:

I was at no loss for a pretext to vindicate this unjust robbery—or, rather, so deadened had I become, I felt no need of a pretext ; and in order to dissipate every idea of the kind, I hastened on, regardless of the unhappy man, whose fearful lamentations long resounded in my ears. Such, at the time, were my impressions of all the circumstances of this affair.

I now ardently desired to return to the

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ranger's garden, in order to ascertain in person the truth of the information communicated by the odious unknown; but I knew not where I was, until, ascending an eminence to take a survey of the surrounding country, I perceived, from its summit, the little town and the gardens almost at my feet. My heart beat violently, and tears of a nature very different from those I had lately shed filled my eyes. I should, then, once more behold her!

Anxiety now hastened my steps. Unseen I met some peasants coming from the town; they were talking of me, of Rascal, and of the ranger. I would not stay to listen to their conversation, but proceeded on. My bosom thrilled with expectation as I entered the garden. At this moment I heard something like a hollow laugh, which caused me involuntarily to shudder. I cast a rapid glance

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around, but could see no one. I passed on ; presently I fancied I heard the sound of footsteps close to me, but no one was within sight. My ears must have deceived me.

It was early ; no one was in Count Peter's bower—the gardens were deserted. I traversed all the well-known paths, and penetrated even to the dwelling-house itself. The same rustling sound became now more and more audible. With anguished feelings I sat down on a seat placed in the sunny space before the door, and actually felt some invisible fiend take a place by me, and heard him utter a sarcastic laugh. The key was turned in the door, which was opened. The forest-master appeared with a paper in his hand. Suddenly my head was, as it were, enveloped in a mist. I looked up, and, oh horror ! the grey-coated man was at my side, peering in my face with a satanic

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grin. He had extended the mist-cap he wore over my head. His shadow and my own were lying together at his feet in perfect amity. He kept twirling in his hand the well-known parchment with an air of indifference; and while the ranger, absorbed in thought, and intent upon his paper, paced up and down the arbour, my tormentor confidentially leaned towards me, and whispered, "So, Mr. Schlemihl, you have at length accepted my invitation, and here we sit, two heads under one hood, as the saying is. Well, well, all in good time. But now you can return me my bird's nest—you have no further occasion for it; and I am sure you are too honourable a man to withhold it from me. No need of thanks, I assure you; I had infinite pleasure in lending it to you." He took it out of my unresisting hand, put it into his pocket, and then broke into so loud a laugh at my expense,

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that the forest-master turned round, startled at the sound. I was petrified. "You must acknowledge," he continued, "that in our position a hood is much more convenient. It serves to conceal not only a man, but his shadow, or as many shadows as he chooses to carry. I, for instance, to-day bring two, you perceive." He laughed again. "Take notice, Schlemihl, that what a man refuses to do with a good grace in the first instance, he is always in the end compelled to do. I am still of opinion that you ought to redeem your shadow and claim your bride (for it is yet time); and as to Rascal, he shall dangle at a rope's end—no difficult matter, so long as we can find a bit. As a mark of friendship I will give you my cap into the bargain."

The mother now came out, and the following conversation took place: "What

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is Minna doing?" "She is weeping."
"Silly 'child! what good can that do?"
"None, certainly; but it is so soon to bestow her hand on another. O husband, you are too harsh to your poor child."
"No, wife; you view things in a wrong light. When she finds herself the wife of a wealthy and honourable man, her tears will soon cease; she will waken out of a dream, as it were, happy and grateful to Heaven and to her parents, as you will see." "Heaven grant it may be so!" replied the wife. "She has, indeed, now considerable property; but after the noise occasioned by her unlucky affair with that adventurer, do you imagine that she is likely soon to meet with so advantageous a match as Mr. Rascal? Do you know the extent of Mr. Rascal's influence and wealth? Why, he has purchased with ready money, in this country, six millions of landed property, free from all

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encumbrances. I have had all the documents in my hands. It was he who outbid me everywhere when I was about to make a desirable purchase; and, besides, he has bills on Mr. Thomas Jones' house to the amount of three millions and a half." "He must have been a prodigious thief!" "How foolishly you talk! he wisely saved where others squandered their property." "A mere livery-servant!" "Nonsense! he has at all events an unexceptionable shadow." "True, but . . .

While this conversation was passing, the grey-coated man looked at me with a satirical smile.

The door opened, and Minna entered, leaning on the arm of her female attendant, silent tears flowing down her fair but pallid face. She seated herself in the chair which had been placed for her under the lime-trees, and her father took a stool by her side. He gently raised her hand;

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and as her tears flowed afresh, he addressed her in the most affectionate manner :—

“ My own dear, good child—my Minna—will act reasonably, and not afflict her poor old father, who only wishes to make her happy. My dearest child, this blow has shaken you—dreadfully, I know it; but you have been saved, as by a miracle, from a miserable fate, my Minna. You loved the unworthy villain most tenderly before his treachery was discovered: I feel all this, Minna; and far be it from me to reproach you for it—in fact, I myself loved him so long as I considered him to be a person of rank: you now see yourself how differently it has turned out. Every dog has a shadow; and the idea of my child having been on the eve of uniting herself to a man who . . . but I am sure you will think no more of him. A suitor has just appeared for you in the person of a man who does not fear the sun—an

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honourable man—no prince indeed, but a man worth ten millions of golden ducats sterling—a sum nearly ten times larger than your fortune consists of—a man, too, who will make my dear child happy—nay, do not oppose me—be my own good, dutiful child—allow your loving father to provide for you, and to dry up these tears. Promise to bestow your hand on Mr. Rascal. Speak, my child: will you not?”

Minna could scarcely summon strength to reply that she had now no longer any hopes or desires on earth, and that she was entirely at her father's disposal. Rascal was therefore immediately sent for, and entered the room with his usual forwardness; but Minna in the meantime had swooned away.

My detested companion looked at me indignantly, and whispered, “Can you endure this? Have you no blood in

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your veins?" He instantly pricked my finger, which bled. "Yes, positively," he exclaimed, "you have some blood left!—come, sign." The parchment and pen were in my hand! . . .

CHAPTER IV

I SUBMIT myself to thy judgment, my dear Chamisso; I do not seek to bias it. I have long been a rigid censor of myself, and nourished at my heart the worm of remorse. This critical moment of my life is ever present to my soul, and I dare only cast a hesitating glance at it, with a deep sense of humiliation and grief. Ah, my dear friend, he who once permits himself thoughtlessly to deviate but one step from the right road, will imperceptibly find himself involved in various intricate paths, all leading him farther and farther astray. In vain he beholds the guiding-stars of Heaven shining before him. No choice is left him—he must descend the precipice, and offer himself up a sacrifice to his fate. After the false

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step which I had rashly made, and which entailed a curse upon me, I had, in the wantonness of passion, entangled one in my fate who had staked all her happiness upon me. What was left for me to do in a case where I had brought another into misery, but to make a desperate leap in the dark to save her?—The last, the only means of rescue presented itself. Think not so meanly of me, Chamisso, as to imagine that I would have shrunk from any sacrifice on my part. In such a case it would have been but a poor ransom. No, Chamisso; but my whole soul was filled with unconquerable hatred to the cringing knave and his crooked ways. I might be doing him injustice; but I shuddered at the bare idea of entering into any fresh compact with him. But here a circumstance took place which entirely changed the face of things. . . .

I know not whether to ascribe it to

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excitement of mind, exhaustion of physical strength (for during the last few days I had scarcely tasted anything), or the antipathy I felt to the society of my fiendish companion; but just as I was about to sign the fatal paper, I fell into a deep swoon, and remained for a long time as if dead. The first sounds which greeted my ear on recovering my consciousness were those of cursing and imprecation; I opened my eyes—it was dusk; my hateful companion was overwhelming me with reproaches. “Is not this behaving like an old woman? Come, rise up, and finish quickly what you were going to do; or perhaps you have changed your determination, and prefer to lie groaning there?”

I raised myself with difficulty from the ground, and gazed around me without speaking a word. It was late in the evening, and I heard strains of festive music proceeding from the ranger’s brilliantly

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illuminated house; groups of company were lounging about the gardens; two persons approached, and seating themselves on the bench I had lately occupied, began to converse on the subject of the marriage which had taken place that morning between the wealthy Mr. Rascal and Minna." All was then over.

I tore off the cap which rendered me invisible; and my companion having disappeared, I plunged in silence into the thickest gloom of the grove, rapidly passed Count Peter's bower towards the entrance-gate; but my tormentor still haunted me, and loaded me with reproaches. "And is this all the gratitude I am to expect from you, Mr. Schlemihl—you, whom I have been watching all the weary day, until you should recover from your nervous attack? What a fool's part I have been enacting! It is of no use flying from me, Mr. Perverse—we are inseparable—you

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have my gold, I have your shadow; this exchange deprives us both of peace. Did you ever hear of a man's shadow leaving him?—yours follows me until you receive it again into favour, and thus free me from it. Disgust and weariness sooner or later will compel you to do what you should have done gladly at first. In vain you strive with fate!”

He continued unceasingly in the same tone, uttering constant sarcasms about the gold and the shadow, till I was completely bewildered. To fly from him was impossible. I had pursued my way through the empty streets towards my own house, which I could scarcely recognise—the windows were broken to pieces, no light was visible, the doors were shut, and the bustle of domestics had ceased. My companion burst into a loud laugh. “Yes, yes,” said he, “you see the state of things: however, you will find your friend Bendel

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at home ; he was sent back the other day so fatigued, that I assure you he has never left the house since. He will have a fine story to tell ! So I wish you a very good night—may we shortly meet again !”

I had repeatedly rung the bell : at last a light appeared ; and Bendel inquired from within who was there. The poor fellow could scarcely contain himself at the sound of my voice. The door flew open, and we were locked in each other's arms. I found him sadly changed ; he was looking ill and feeble. I, too, was altered ; my hair had become quite grey. He conducted me through the desolate apartments to an inner room, which had escaped the general wreck. After partaking of some refreshment, we seated ourselves ; and, with fresh lamentations, he began to tell me that the grey withered old man whom he had met with my shadow had insensibly led him such a

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zigzag race, that he had lost all traces of me, and at last sank down exhausted with fatigue; that, unable to find me, he had returned home, when, shortly after, the mob, at Rascal's instigation, assembled violently before the house, broke the windows, and by all sorts of excesses completely satiated their fury. Thus had they treated their benefactor. My servants had fled in all directions. The police had banished me from the town as a suspicious character, and granted me an interval of twenty-four hours to leave the territory. Bendel added many particulars as to the information I had already obtained respecting Rascal's wealth and marriage. This villain, it seems—who was the author of all the measures taken against me—became possessed of my secret nearly from the beginning, and, tempted by the love of money, had supplied himself with a key to my chest, and from that time had been

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laying the foundation of his present wealth. Bendel related all this with many tears, and wept for joy that I was once more safely restored to him, after all his fears and anxieties for me. In me, however, such a state of things only awoke despair.

My dreadful fate now stared me in the face in all its gigantic and unchangeable horror. The source of tears was exhausted within me; no groans escaped my breast; but with cool indifference I bared my unprotected head to the blast. "Bendel," said I, "you know my fate; this heavy visitation is a punishment for my early sins: but as for you, my innocent friend, I can no longer permit you to share my destiny. I will depart this very night—saddle me a horse—I will set out alone. Remain here, Bendel—I insist upon it: there must be some chests of gold still left in the house—take them, they are yours. I shall be a restless and solitary

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wanderer on the face of the earth ; but should better days arise, and fortune once more smile propitiously on me, then I will not forget your steady fidelity ; for in hours of deep distress your faithful bosom has been the depository of my sorrows." With a bursting heart, the worthy Bendel prepared to obey this last command of his master ; for I was deaf to all his arguments, and blind to his tears. My horse was brought—I pressed my weeping friend to my bosom—threw myself into the saddle, and, under the friendly shades of night, quitted this sepulchre of my existence, indifferent which road my horse should take ; for now on this side the grave I had neither wishes, hopes, nor fears.

After a short time I was joined by a traveller on foot, who, after walking for a while by the side of my horse, observed

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that as we both seemed to be travelling the same road, he should beg my permission to lay his cloak on the horse's back behind me, to which I silently assented. He thanked me with easy politeness for this trifling favour, praised my horse, and then took occasion to extol the happiness and the power of the rich, and fell, I scarcely know how, into a sort of conversation with himself, in which I merely acted the part of listener. He unfolded his views of human life and of the world, and, touching on metaphysics, demanded an answer from that cloudy science to the question of questions—the answer that should solve all mysteries. He deduced one problem from another in a very lucid manner, and then proceeded to their solution.

You may remember, my dear friend, that after having run through the school-philosophy, I became sensible of my

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unfitness for metaphysical speculations, and therefore totally abstained from engaging in them. Since then I have acquiesced in some things, and abandoned all hope of comprehending others; trusting, as you advised me, to my own plain sense and the voice of conscience to direct and, if possible, maintain me in the right path.

Now this skilful rhetorician seemed to me to expend great skill in rearing a firmly-constructed edifice, towering aloft on its own self-supported basis, but resting on, and upheld by, some internal principle of necessity. I regretted in it the total absence of what I desired to find; and thus it seemed a mere work of art, serving only by its elegance and exquisite finish to captivate the eye. Nevertheless, I listened with pleasure to this eloquently gifted man, who diverted my attention from my own sorrows to the speaker; and he would have secured

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my entire acquiescence if he had appealed to my heart as well as to my judgment.

In the meantime the hours had passed away, and morning had already dawned imperceptibly in the horizon. Looking up, I shuddered as I beheld in the east all those splendid hues that announce the rising sun. At this hour, when all natural shadows are seen in their full proportions, not a fence or a shelter of any kind could I descry in this open country, and I was not alone ! I cast a glance at my companion, and shuddered again—it was the man in the grey coat himself ! He laughed at my surprise, and said, without giving me time to speak : “ You see, according to the fashion of this world, mutual convenience binds us together for a time : there is plenty of time to think of parting. The road here along the mountain, which perhaps has escaped your notice, is the only one that you can prudently take ;

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into the valley you dare not descend—the path over the mountain would but re-conduct you to the town which you have left—my road, too, lies this way. I perceive you change colour at the rising sun—I have no objections to let you have the loan of your shadow during our journey, and in return you may not be indisposed to tolerate my society. You have now no Bendel; but I will act for him. I regret that you are not over-fond of me; but that need not prevent you from accepting my poor services. The devil is not so black as he is painted. Yesterday you provoked me, I own; but now that is all forgotten, and you must confess I have this day succeeded in beguiling the wearisomeness of your journey. Come, take your shadow, and make trial of it.”

The sun had risen, and we were meeting with passengers; so I reluctantly consented. With a smile, he immediately let

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my shadow glide down to the ground ; and I beheld it take its place by that of my horse, and gaily trot along with me. My feelings were anything but pleasant. I rode through groups of country people, who respectfully made way for the well-mounted stranger. Thus I proceeded, occasionally stealing a sidelong glance, with a beating heart, from my horse at the shadow once my own, but now, alas ! accepted as a loan from a stranger, or rather a fiend. He moved on carelessly at my side, whistling a song. He being on foot, and I on horseback, the temptation to hazard a silly project occurred to me ; so, suddenly turning my bridle, I set spurs to my horse, and at full gallop struck into a by-path ; but my shadow, on the sudden movement of my horse, glided away, and stood on the road quietly awaiting the approach of its legal owner. I was obliged to return abashed towards

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the grey man ; but he very coolly finished his song, and with a laugh set my shadow to rights again, reminding me that it was at my option to have it irrevocably fixed to me, by purchasing it on just and equitable terms. "I hold you," said he, "by the shadow ; and you seek in vain to get rid of me. A rich man like you requires a shadow, unquestionably ; and you are to blame for not having seen this sooner."

I now continued my journey on the same road ; every convenience and even luxury of life was mine ; I moved about in peace and freedom, for I possessed a shadow, though a borrowed one ; and all the respect due to wealth was paid to me. But a deadly disease preyed on my heart. My extraordinary companion, who gave himself out to be the humble attendant of the richest individual in the world, was remarkable for his dexterity ; in short, his

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singular address and promptitude admirably fitted him to be the very *beau idéal* of a rich man's lacquey. But he never stirred from my side, and tormented me with constant assurances that a day would most certainly come when, if it were only to get rid of him, I should gladly comply with his terms, and redeem my shadow. Thus he became as irksome as he was hateful to me. I really stood in awe of him—I had placed myself in his power. Since he had effected my return to the pleasures of the world, which I had resolved to shun, he had the perfect mastery of me. His eloquence was irresistible, and at times I almost thought he was in the right. A shadow is indeed necessary to a man of fortune; and if I chose to maintain the position in which he had placed me, there was only one means of doing so. But on one point I was immovable: since I had sacrificed my love for

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Minna, and thereby blighted the happiness of my whole life, I would not now, for all the shadows in the universe, be induced to sign away my soul to this being—I knew not how it might end.

One day we were sitting by the entrance of a cavern, much visited by strangers who ascended the mountain: the rushing noise of a subterranean torrent resounded from the fathomless abyss, the depths of which exceeded all calculation. He was, according to his favourite custom, employing all the powers of his lavish fancy, and all the charm of the most brilliant colouring, to depict to me what I might effect in the world by virtue of my purse, when once I had recovered my shadow. With my elbows resting on my knees, I kept my face concealed in my hands, and listened to the false fiend, my heart torn between the temptation and my determined opposition to it. Such indecision

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I could no longer endure, and resolved on one decisive effort.

“You seem to forget,” said I, “that I tolerate your presence only on certain conditions, and that I am to retain perfect freedom of action.”

“You have but to command, I depart,” was all his reply.

The threat was familiar to me ; I was silent. He then began to fold up my shadow. I turned pale, but allowed him to continue. A long silence ensued, which he was the first to break.

“You cannot endure me, Mr. Schlemihl—you hate me—I am aware of it—but why?—is it, perhaps, because you attacked me on the open plain, in order to rob me of my invisible bird’s nest? or is it because you thievishly endeavoured to seduce away the shadow with which I had entrusted you—my own property—confiding implicitly in your honour? I,

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for my part, have no dislike to you. It is perfectly natural that you should avail yourself of every means, presented either by cunning or force, to promote your own interests. That your principles also should be of the strictest sort, and your intentions of the most honourable description,—these are fancies with which I have nothing to do ; I do not pretend to such strictness myself. Each of us is free, I to act, and you to think, as seems best. Did I ever seize you by the throat, to tear out of your body that valuable soul I so ardently wish to possess? Did I ever set my servant to attack you, to get back my purse, or attempt to run off with it from you?”

I had not a word to reply.

“Well, well,” he exclaimed, “you detest me, and I know it; but I bear you no malice on that account. We must part—that is clear; also I must

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say that you begin to be very tiresome to me. Once more let me advise you to free yourself entirely from my troublesome presence by the purchase of your shadow."

I held out the purse to him.

"No, Mr. Schlemihl; not at that price."

With a deep sigh, I said, "Be it so, then; let us part, I entreat; cross my path no more. There is surely room enough in the world for us both."

Laughing, he replied, "I go; but just allow me to inform you how you may at any time recall me whenever you have a mind to see your most humble servant: you have only to shake your purse, the sound of the gold will bring me to you in an instant. In this world every one consults his own advantage; but you see I have thought of yours, and clearly confer upon you a new power. Oh this

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purse! it would still prove a powerful bond between us, had the moth begun to devour your shadow.—But enough: you hold me by my gold, and may command your servant at any distance. You know that I can be very serviceable to my friends; and that the rich are my peculiar care—this you have observed. As to your shadow, allow me to say, you can only redeem it on one condition.”

Recollections of former days came over me; and I hastily asked him if he had obtained Mr. Thomas Jones’ signature.

He smiled, and said, “It was by no means necessary from so excellent a friend.”

“Where is he? for God’s sake tell me: I insist upon knowing.”

With some hesitation, he put his hand into his pocket, and drew out the altered and pallid form of Mr. Jones by the hair of his head, whose livid lips uttered the

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awful words, "*Justo judicio Dei judicatus sum ; justo judicio Dei condemnatus sum*"—"I am judged and condemned by the just judgment of God." I was horror-struck ; and instantly throwing the jingling purse into the abyss, I exclaimed, "Wretch ! in the name of Heaven, I conjure you to be gone !—away from my sight !—never appear before me again !" With a dark expression on his countenance he arose, and immediately vanished behind the huge rocks which surrounded the place.



Illustration of the scene



CHAPTER V

I WAS now left equally without gold and without shadow; but a heavy load was taken from my breast, and I felt cheerful. Had not my Minna been irrecoverably lost to me, or even had I been perfectly free from self-reproach on her account, I felt that happiness might yet have been mine. At present I was lost in doubt as to my future course. I examined my pockets, and found I had a few gold pieces still left, which I counted with feelings of great satisfaction. I had left my horse at the inn, and was ashamed to return, or at all events I must wait till the sun had set, which at present was high in the heavens. I laid myself down under a shady tree and fell into a peaceful sleep.

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Lovely forms floated in airy measures before me, and filled up my delightful dreams. Minna, with a garland of flowers entwined in her hair, was bending over me with a smile of good-will; also the worthy Bendel was crowned with flowers, and hastened to meet me with friendly greetings. Many other forms seemed to rise up confusedly in the distance: thyself among the number, Chamisso. Perfect radiance beamed around them, but none had a shadow; and what was more surprising, there was no appearance of unhappiness on this account. Nothing was to be seen or heard but flowers and music; and love and joy, and groves of never-fading palms, seemed the natives of that happy clime.

In vain I tried to detain and comprehend the lovely but fleeting forms. I was conscious, also, of being in a dream, and was anxious that nothing should rouse

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me from it; and when I did awake, I kept my eyes closed, in order if possible to continue the illusion. At last I opened my eyes. The sun was now visible in the east; I must have slept the whole night: I looked upon this as a warning not to return to the inn. What I had left there I was content to lose, without much regret; and resigning myself to Providence, I decided on taking a by-road that led through the wooded declivity of the mountain. I never once cast a glance behind me; nor did it ever occur to me to return, as I might have done, to Bendel, whom I had left in affluence. I reflected on the new character I was now going to assume in the world. My present garb was very humble—consisting of an old black coat I formerly had worn at Berlin, and which by some chance was the first I put my hand on before setting out on this journey, a

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travelling-cap, and an old pair of boots. I cut down a knotted stick in memory of the spot, and commenced my pilgrimage.

In the forest I met an aged peasant, who gave me a friendly greeting, and with whom I entered into conversation, requesting, as a traveller desirous of information, some particulars relative to the road, the country, and its inhabitants, the productions of the mountain, &c. He replied to my various inquiries with readiness and intelligence. At last we reached the bed of a mountain-torrent, which had laid waste a considerable tract of the forest; I inwardly shuddered at the idea of the open sunshine. I suffered the peasant to go before me. In the middle of the very place which I dreaded so much he suddenly stopped, and turned back to give me an account of this inundation; but instantly perceiving that I had no shadow, he broke off abruptly,

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and exclaimed, "How is this?—you have no shadow!"

"Alas, alas!" said I, "in a long and serious illness I had the misfortune to lose my hair, my nails, and my shadow. Look, good father; although my hair has grown again, it is quite white; and at my age, my nails are still very short; and my poor shadow seems to have left me, never to return."

"Ah!" said the old man, shaking his head; "no shadow! that was indeed a terrible illness, sir."

But he did not resume his narrative; and at the very first cross-road we came to, left me without uttering a syllable. Fresh tears flowed from my eyes, and my cheerfulness had fled. With a heavy heart I travelled on, avoiding all society. I plunged into the deepest shades of the forest; and often, to avoid a sunny tract of country, I waited for hours till every

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human being had left it, and I could pass it unobserved. In the evenings I took shelter in the villages. I bent my steps to a mine in the mountains, where I hoped to meet with work underground; for besides that my present situation compelled me to provide for my own support, I felt that incessant and laborious occupation alone could divert my mind from dwelling on painful subjects. A few rainy days assisted me materially on my journey; but it was to the no small detriment of my boots, the soles of which were better suited to Count Peter than to the poor foot-traveller. I was soon barefoot, and a new purchase must be made. The following morning I commenced an earnest search in a market-place, where a fair was being held; and I saw in one of the booths new and second-hand boots set out for sale. I was a long time selecting

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and bargaining; I wished much to have a new pair, but was frightened at the extravagant price; and so was obliged to content myself with a second-hand pair, still pretty good and strong, which the beautiful fair-haired youth who kept the booth handed over to me with a cheerful smile, wishing me a prosperous journey. I went on, and left the place immediately by the northern gate.

I was so lost in my own thoughts, that I walked along scarcely knowing how or where. I was calculating the chances of my reaching the mine by the evening, and considering how I should introduce myself. I had not gone two hundred steps, when I perceived I was not in the right road. I looked round, and found myself in a wild-looking forest of ancient firs, where apparently the stroke of the axe had never been heard. A few steps more brought me amid huge rocks covered

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with moss and saxifragous plants, between which whole fields of snow and ice were extended. The air was intensely cold. I looked round, and the forest had disappeared behind me; a few steps more, and there was the stillness of death itself. The icy plain on which I stood stretched to an immeasurable distance, and a thick cloud rested upon it; the sun was of a red blood-colour at the verge of the horizon; the cold was insupportable. I could not imagine what had happened to me. The benumbing frost made me quicken my pace. I heard a distant sound of waters; and, at one step more, I stood on the icy shore of some ocean. Innumerable droves of sea-dogs rushed past me and plunged into the waves. I continued my way along this coast, and again met with rocks, plains, birch and fir forests, and yet only a few minutes had elapsed. It

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was now intensely hot. I looked around, and suddenly found myself between some fertile rice-fields and mulberry-trees ; I sat down under their shade, and found by my watch that it was just one quarter of an hour since I had left the village market. I fancied it was a dream ; but no, I was indeed awake, as I felt by the experiment I made of biting my tongue. I closed my eyes in order to collect my scattered thoughts. Presently I heard unintelligible words uttered in a nasal tone ; and I beheld two Chinese, whose Asiatic physiognomies were not to be mistaken, even had their costume not betrayed their origin. They were addressing me in the language and with the salutations of their country. I rose, and drew back a couple of steps. They had disappeared ; the landscape was entirely changed ; the rice-fields had given place to trees and woods. I examined some of the trees and plants

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around me, and ascertained such of them as I was acquainted with to be productions of the southern part of Asia. I made one step towards a particular tree, and again all was changed. I now moved on like a recruit at drill, taking slow and measured steps, gazing with astonished eyes at the wonderful variety of regions, plains, meadows, mountains, steppes, and sandy deserts, which passed in succession before me. I had now no doubt that I had seven-leagued boots on my feet.

I fell on my knees in silent gratitude, shedding tears of thankfulness; for I now saw clearly what was to be my future condition. Shut out by early sins from all human society, I was offered amends for the privation by Nature herself, which I had ever loved. The earth was granted me as a rich garden; and the knowledge of her operations was to be the study and object of my life. This



the Lover's Leap



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was not a mere resolution. I have since endeavoured, with anxious and unabated industry, faithfully to imitate the finished and brilliant model then presented to me; and my vanity has received a check when led to compare the picture with the original. I rose immediately, and took a hasty survey of this new field, where I hoped afterwards to reap a rich harvest.

I stood on the heights of Thibet; and the sun I had lately beheld in the east was now sinking in the west. I traversed Asia from east to west, and thence passed into Africa, which I curiously examined at repeated visits in all directions. As I gazed on the ancient pyramids and temples of Egypt, I descried, in the sandy deserts near Thebes of the hundred gates, the caves where Christian hermits dwelt of old.

My determination was instantly taken,

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that here should be my future dwelling. I chose one of the most secluded, but roomy, comfortable, and inaccessible to the jackals.

I stepped over from the Pillars of Hercules to Europe; and having taken a survey of its northern and southern countries, I passed by the north of Asia, on the polar glaciers, to Greenland and America, visiting both parts of this continent; and the winter, which was already at its height in the south, drove me quickly back from Cape Horn to the north. I waited till daylight had risen in the east of Asia, and then, after a short rest, continued my pilgrimage. I followed in both the Americas the vast chain of the Andes, once considered the loftiest on our globe. I stepped carefully and slowly from one summit to another, sometimes over snowy heights, sometimes over flaming volcanoes, often

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breathless from fatigue. At last I reached Elias's mountain, and sprang over Behring's Straits into Asia ; I followed the western coast in its various windings, carefully observing which of the neighbouring isles was accessible to me. From the peninsula of Malacca, my boots carried me to Sumatra, Java, Bali, and Lombok. I made many attempts—often with danger, and always unsuccessfully—to force my way over the numerous little islands and rocks with which this sea is studded, wishing to find a north-west passage to Borneo and other islands of the Archipelago.

At last I sat down at the extreme point of Lombok, my eyes turned towards the south-east, lamenting that I had so soon reached the limits allotted to me, and bewailing my fate as a captive in his grated cell. Thus was I shut out from that remarkable country, New Holland, and the islands of the southern ocean, so

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essentially necessary to a knowledge of the earth, and which would have best assisted me in the study of the animal and vegetable kingdoms. And thus, at the very outset, I beheld all my labours condemned to be limited to mere fragments.

Ah ! Chamisso, what is the activity of man ?

Frequently in the most rigorous winters of the southern hemisphere I have rashly thrown myself on a fragment of drifting ice between Cape Horn and Van Diemen's Land, in the hope of effecting a passage to New Holland, reckless of the cold and the vast ocean, reckless of my fate, even should this savage land prove my grave.

But all in vain—I never reached New Holland. Each time, when defeated in my attempt, I returned to Lombok ; and seated at its extreme point, my eyes

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directed to the south-east, I gave way afresh to lamentations that my range of investigation was so limited. At last I tore myself from the spot, and, heartily grieved at my disappointment, returned to the interior of Asia. Setting out at morning dawn, I traversed it from east to west, and at night reached the cave in Thebes which I had previously selected for my dwelling-place, and had visited yesterday afternoon.

After a short repose, as soon as daylight had visited Europe, it was my first care to provide myself with the articles of which I stood most in need. First of all a drag, to act on my boots; for I had experienced the inconvenience of these whenever I wished to shorten my steps and examine surrounding objects more fully. A pair of slippers to go over the boots served the purpose effectually; and from that time I carried two

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pairs about me, because I frequently cast them off from my feet in my botanical investigations, without having time to pick them up, when threatened by the approach of lions, men, or hyenas. My excellent watch, owing to the short duration of my movements, was also on these occasions an admirable chronometer. I wanted, besides, a sextant, a few philosophical instruments, and some books. To purchase these things I made several unwilling journeys to London and Paris, choosing a time when I could be hid by the favouring clouds. As all my ill-gotten gold was exhausted, I carried over from Africa some ivory, which is there so plentiful, in payment of my purchases—taking care, however, to pick out the smallest teeth, in order not to over-burden myself. I had thus soon provided myself with all that I wanted, and now entered on a new mode of life

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as a student—wandering over the globe—measuring the height of the mountains, and the temperature of the air and of the springs—observing the manners and habits of animals—investigating plants and flowers. From the equator to the pole, and from the new world to the old, I was constantly engaged in repeating and comparing my experiments.

My usual food consisted of the eggs of the African ostrich or northern sea-birds, with a few fruits, especially those of the palm and the banana of the tropics. The tobacco-plant consoled me when I was depressed; and the affection of my spaniel was a compensation for the loss of human sympathy and society. When I returned from my excursions, loaded with fresh treasures, to my cave in Thebes, which he guarded during my absence, he ever sprang joyfully forward to greet me, and made me feel that I was indeed not

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alone on the earth. An adventure soon occurred which brought me once more among my fellow-creatures.

One day, as I was gathering lichens and algæ on the northern coast, with the drag on my boots, a bear suddenly made his appearance, and was stealing towards me round the corner of a rock. After throwing away my slippers, I attempted to step across to an island, by means of a rock, projecting from the waves in the intermediate space, that served as a stepping-stone. I reached the rock safely with one foot, but instantly fell into the sea with the other, one of my slippers having inadvertently remained on. The cold was intense; and I escaped this imminent peril at the risk of my life. On coming ashore, I hastened to the Libyan sands to dry myself in the sun; but the heat affected my head so much,

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that, in a fit of illness, I staggered back to the north. In vain I sought relief by change of place—hurrying from east to west, and from west to east—now in climes of the south, now in those of the north; sometimes I rushed into daylight, sometimes into the shades of night. I know not how long this lasted. A burning fever raged in my veins; with extreme anguish I felt my senses leaving me. Suddenly, by an unlucky accident, I trod upon some one's foot, whom I had hurt, and received a blow in return which laid me senseless.

On recovering, I found myself lying comfortably in a good bed, which, with many other beds, stood in a spacious and handsome apartment. Some one was watching by me; people seemed to be walking from one bed to another; they came beside me, and spoke of me as *Number Twelve*. On the wall, at the

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foot of my bed—it was no dream, for I distinctly read it—on a black marble tablet was inscribed my name, in large letters of gold :—

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Underneath were two rows of letters in smaller characters, which I was too feeble to connect together, and closed my eyes again.

I now heard something read aloud, in which I distinctly noted the words, “ Peter Schlemihl,” but could not collect the full meaning. I saw a man of benevolent aspect, and a very beautiful female dressed in black, standing near my bed ; their countenances were not unknown to me, but in my weak state I could not remember who they were. Some time elapsed, and I began to regain my strength. I was called *Number Twelve*, and, from my long beard, was supposed to be a Jew,

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but was not the less carefully nursed on that account. No one seemed to perceive that I was destitute of a shadow. My boots, I was assured, together with everything found on me when I was brought here, were in safe keeping, and would be given up to me on my restoration to health. This place was called the SCHLEMIHLIUM: the daily recitation I had heard, was an exhortation to pray for Peter Schlemihl as the founder and benefactor of this institution. The benevolent-looking man whom I had seen by my bedside was Bendel; the beautiful lady in black was Minna.

I had been enjoying the advantages of the Schlemihlium without being recognised; and I learned, further, that I was in Bendel's native town, where he had employed a part of my once unhallowed gold in founding an hospital in my name, under his superintendence, and that its

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unfortunate inmates daily pronounced blessings on me. Minna had become a widow : an unhappy lawsuit had deprived Rascal of his life, and Minna of the greater part of her property. Her parents were no more ; and here she dwelt in widowed piety, wholly devoting herself to works of mercy.

One day, as she stood by the side of Number Twelve's bed with Bendel, he said to her, "Noble lady, why expose yourself so frequently to this unhealthy atmosphere? Has fate dealt so harshly with you as to render you desirous of death?"

"By no means, Mr. Bendel," she replied ; "since I have awoke from my long dream, all has gone well with me. I now neither wish for death nor fear it, and think on the future and on the past with equal serenity. Do you not also feel an inward satisfaction in thus

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paying a pious tribute of gratitude and love to your old master and friend?"

"Thanks be to God, I do, noble lady," said he. "Ah, how wonderfully has everything fallen out! How thoughtlessly have we sipped joys and sorrows from the full cup now drained to the last drop; and we might fancy the past a mere prelude to the real scene for which we now wait armed by experience. How different has been the reality! Yet let us not regret the past, but rather rejoice that we have not lived in vain. As respects our old friend also, I have a firm hope that it is now better with him than formerly."

"I trust so, too," answered Minna; and so saying she passed by me, and they departed.

This conversation made a deep impression on me; and I hesitated whether I should discover myself or depart

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So far as my boots would carry me, I have observed and studied our globe and its conformation, its mountains and temperature, the atmosphere in its various changes, the influences of the magnetic power; in fact, I have studied all living creation—and more especially the kingdom of plants—more profoundly than any one of our race. I have arranged all the facts in proper order, to the best of my ability, in different works. The consequences deducible from these facts, and my views respecting them, I have hastily recorded in some essays and dissertations. I have settled the geography of the interior of Africa and the Arctic regions, of the interior of Asia and of its eastern coast. My *Historia stirpium plantarum utriusque orbis* is an extensive fragment of a *Flora universalis terræ* and a part of my *Systema naturæ*. Besides increasing the number of our known

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species by more than a third, I have also contributed somewhat to the natural system of plants and to a knowledge of their geography. I am now deeply engaged on my *Fauna*, and shall take care to have my manuscripts sent to the University of Berlin before my decease.

I have selected you, my dear Chamisso, to be the guardian of my wonderful history, thinking that, when I have left this world, it may afford valuable instruction to the living. As for you, Chamisso, if you would live amongst your fellow-creatures, learn to value your shadow more than gold ; if you would only live to yourself and your nobler part—in this you need no counsel.





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